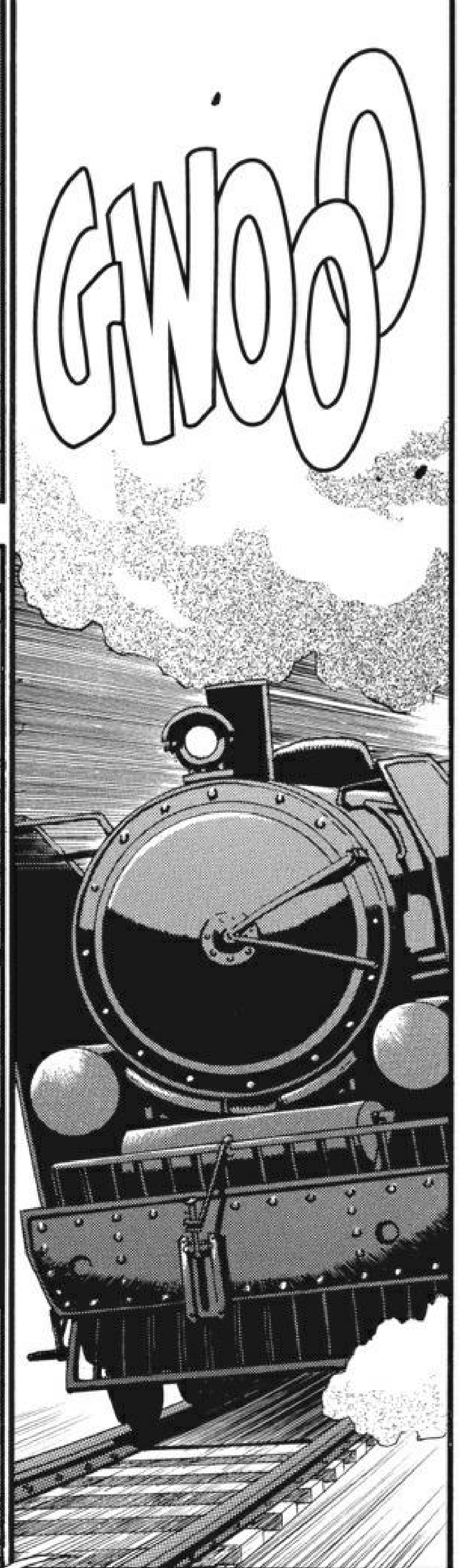




THE
YOUSWELL
COAL
MINES.

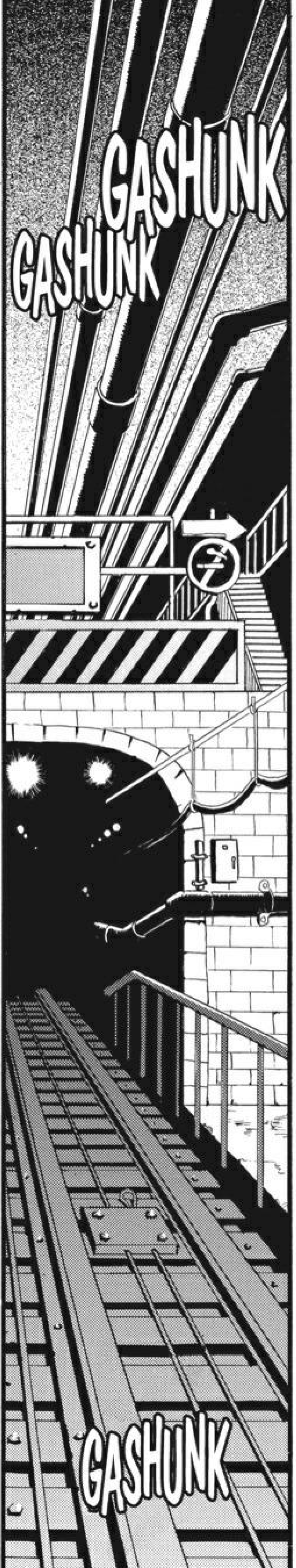
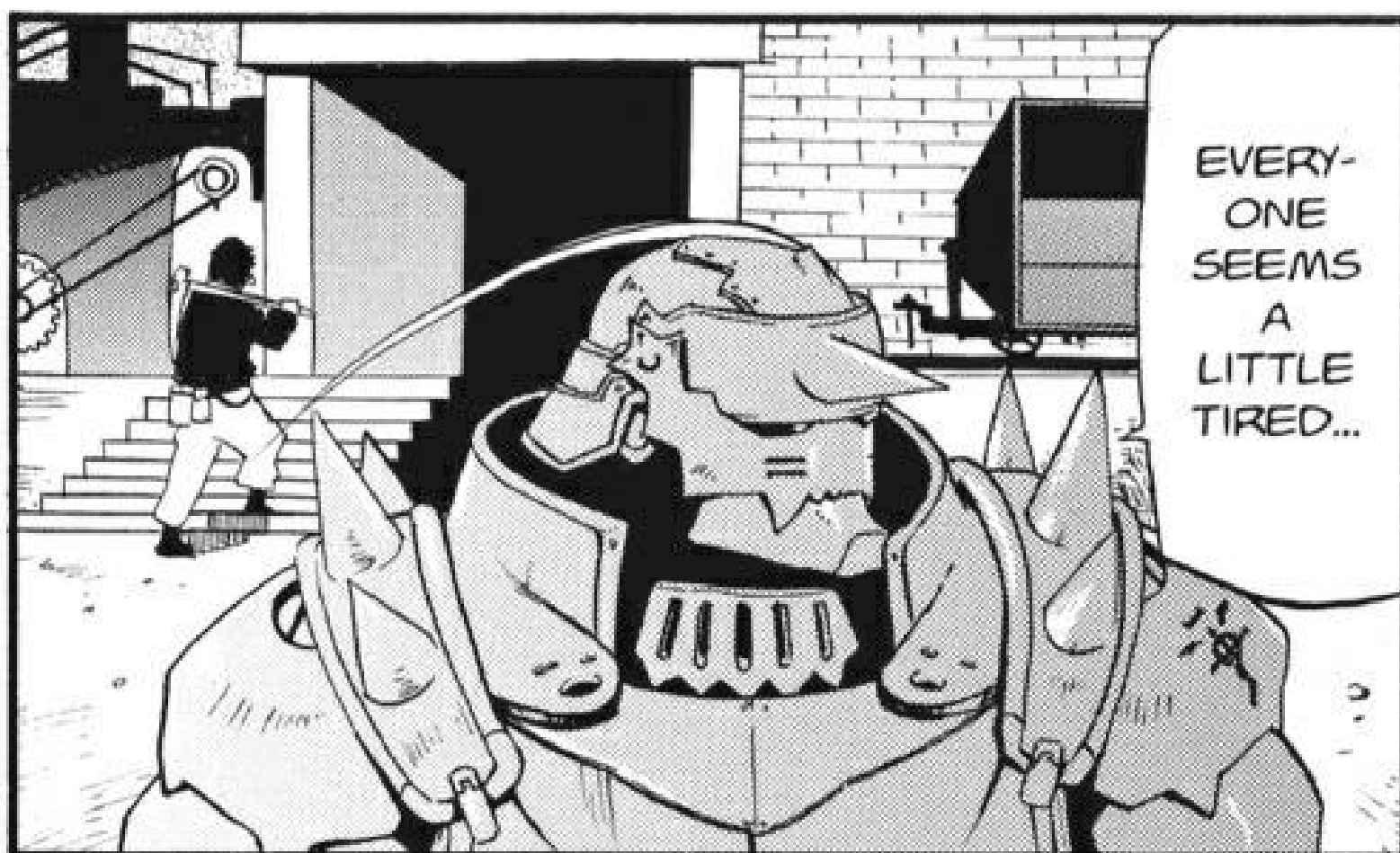
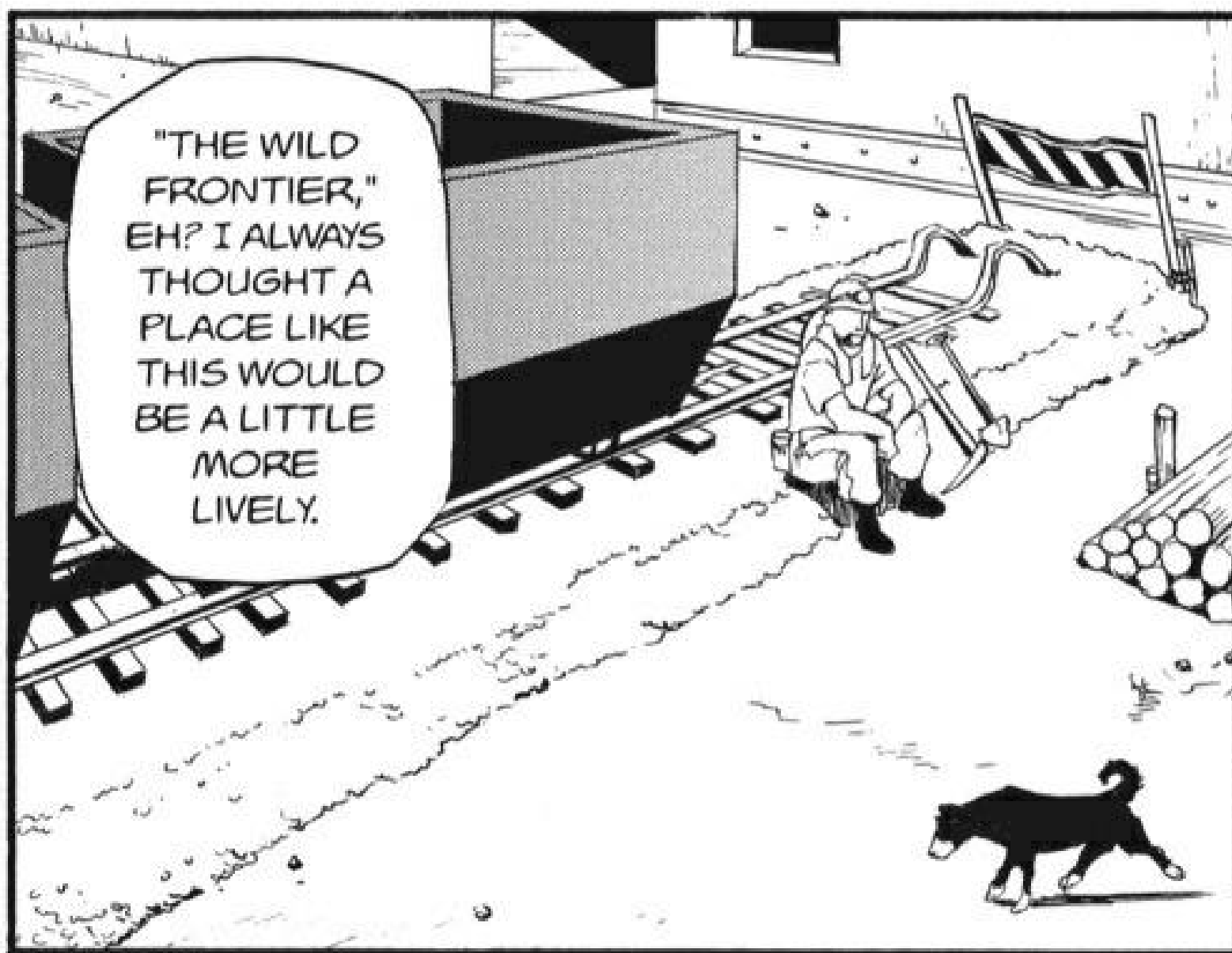
"THE
TOWN
ON THE
EASTERN
BORDER."

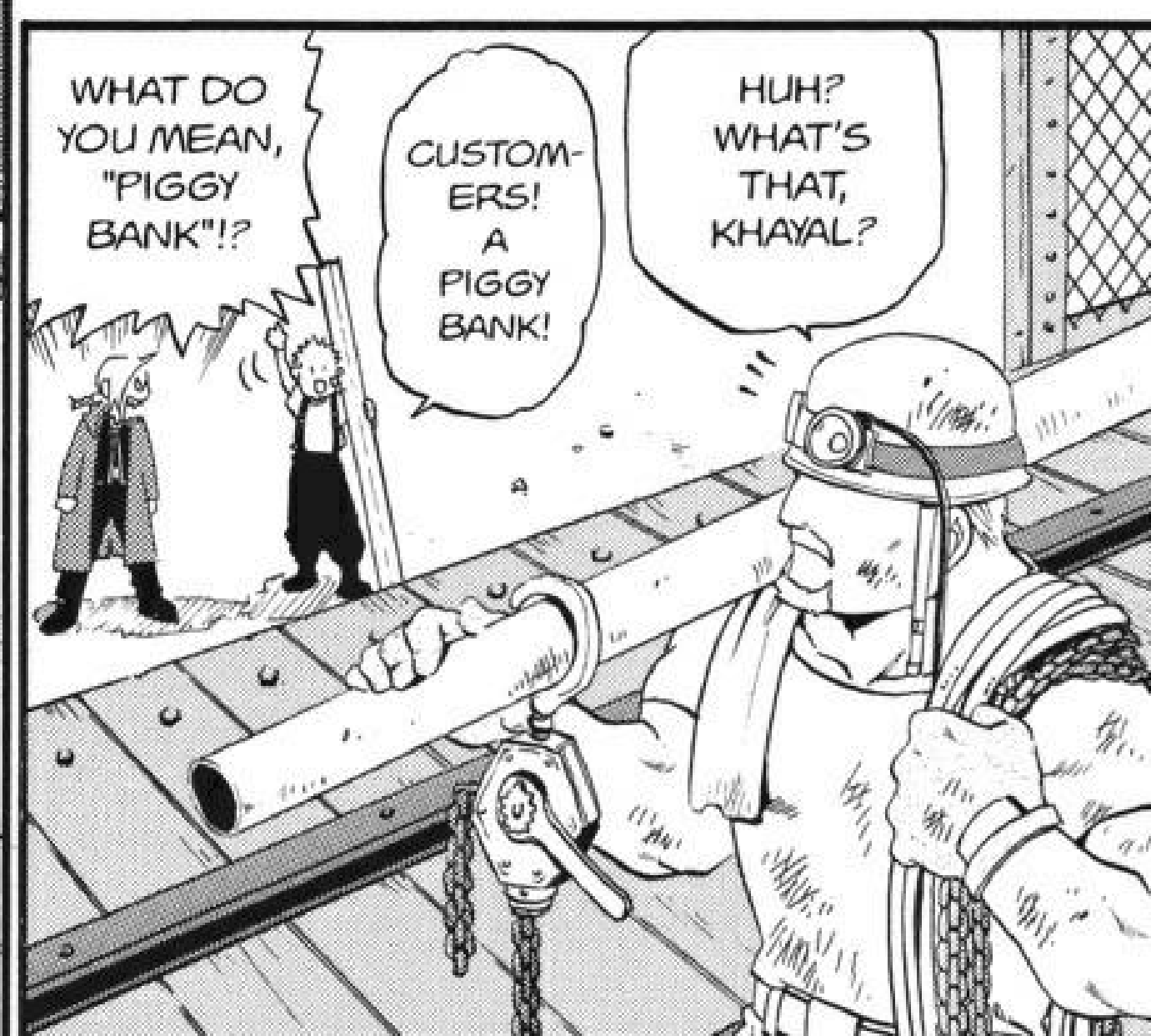
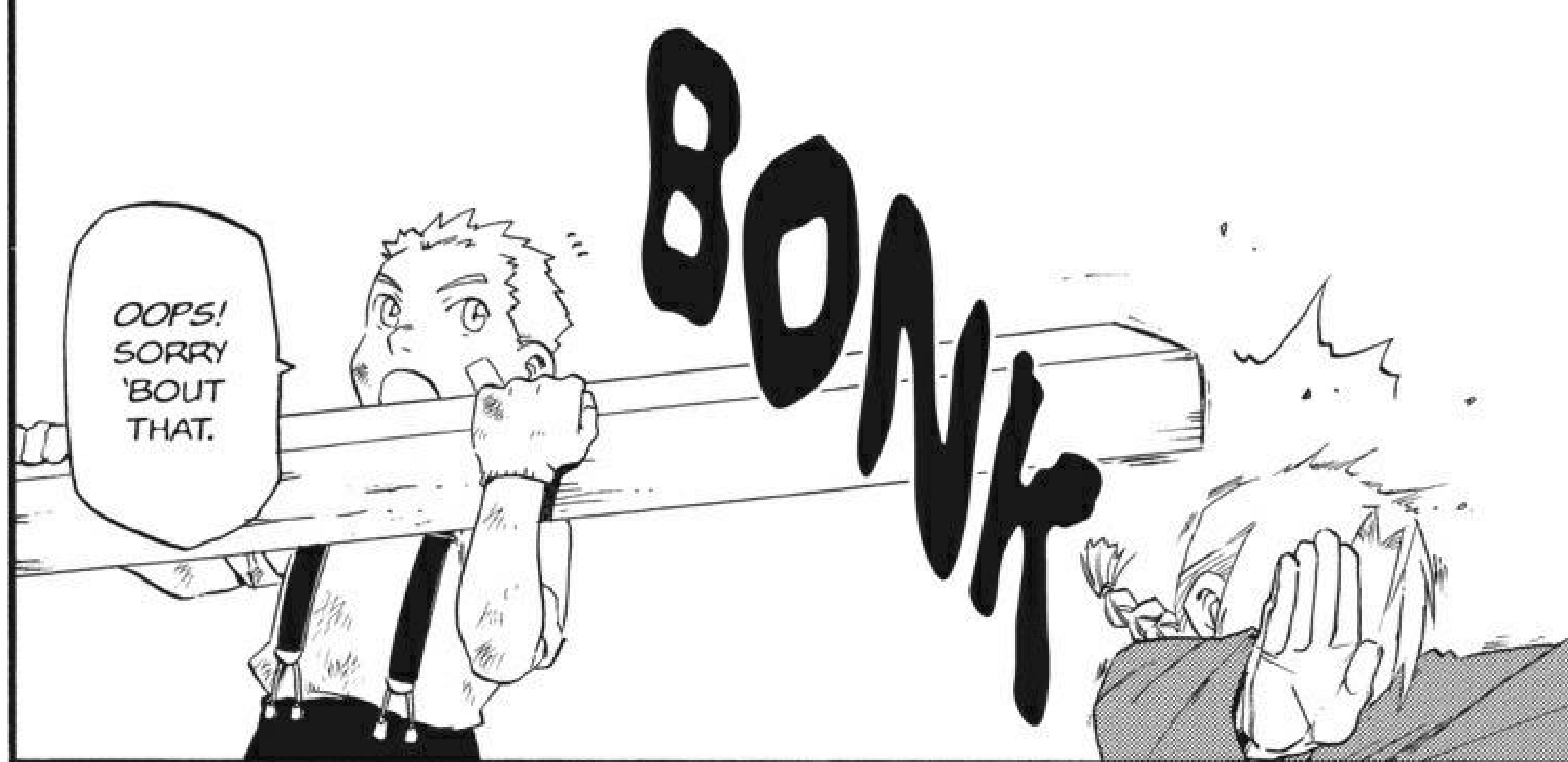


Chapter 3

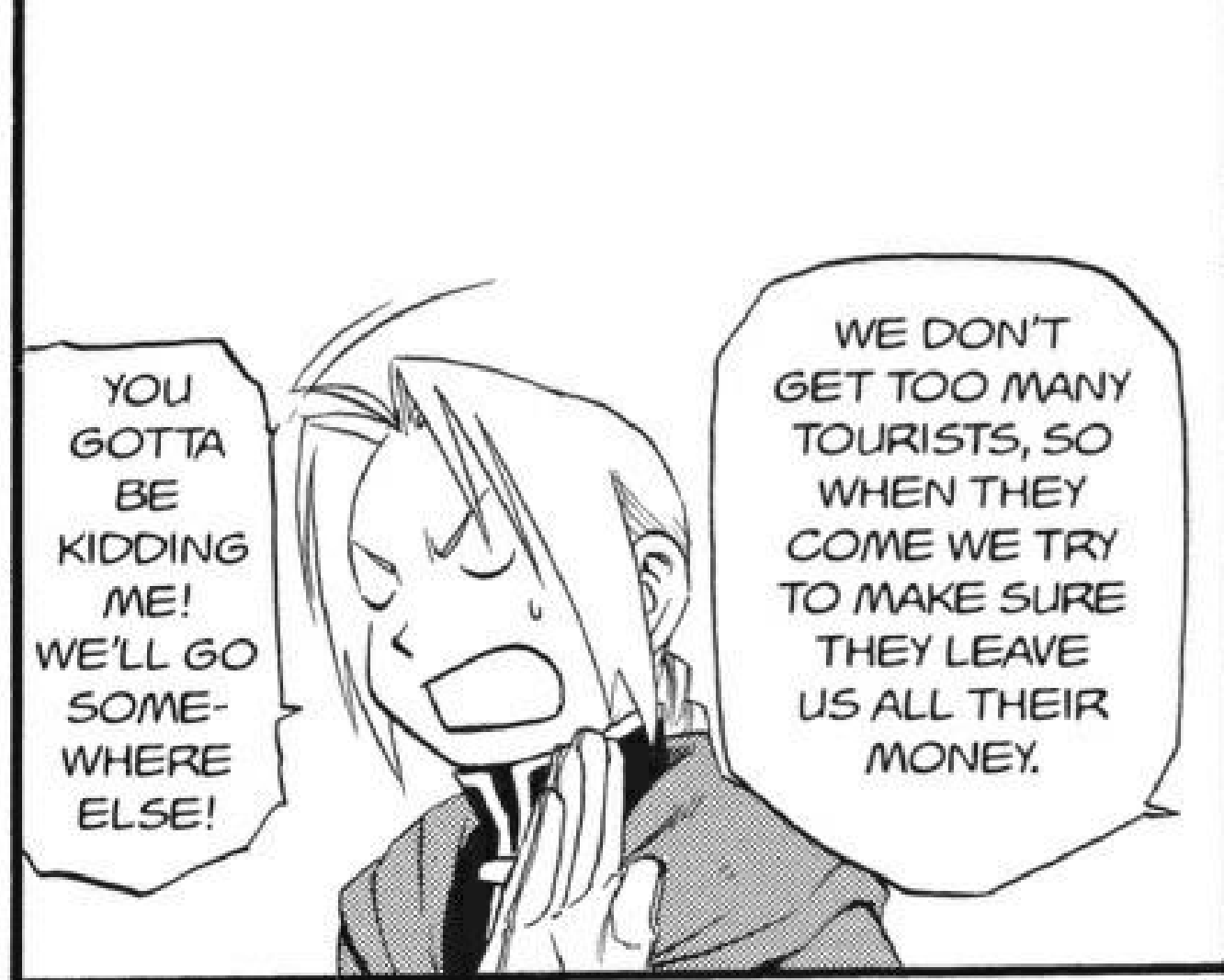
The Mining Town











YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME! WE'LL GO SOMEWHERE ELSE!

WE DON'T GET TOO MANY TOURISTS, SO WHEN THEY COME WE TRY TO MAKE SURE THEY LEAVE US ALL THEIR MONEY.



I SAID YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD IT.

YOU'RE OFF BY ONE DECIMAL POINT!

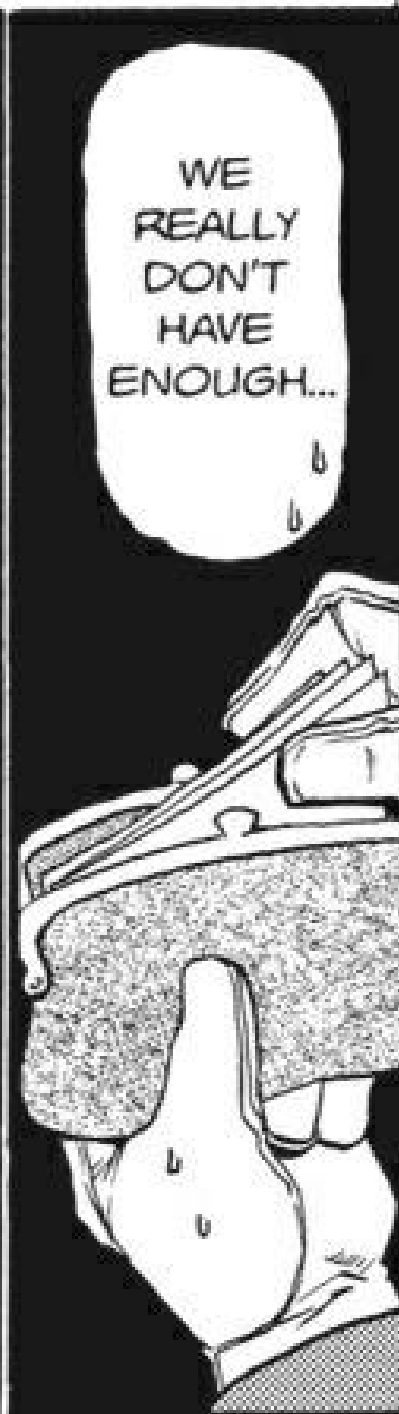
200 THOUSAND?! WHAT A RIP OFF !!



YOU KNOW IT'S FORBIDDEN BY THE STATE ALCHEMY LAWS TO MAKE GOLD!

I GUESS THE ONLY THING WE CAN DO IS USE ALCHEMY TO TURN PEBBLES INTO GOLD!

Psst Psst Psst Psst Psst Psst



WE REALLY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH...



FORGET ABOUT IT. THE PRICES ARE THE SAME EVERYWHERE ELSE.



THERE'S NO ESCAPE, PIGGY BANK!

CLUTCH



DAD! THIS GUY'S AN ALCHEMIST !!

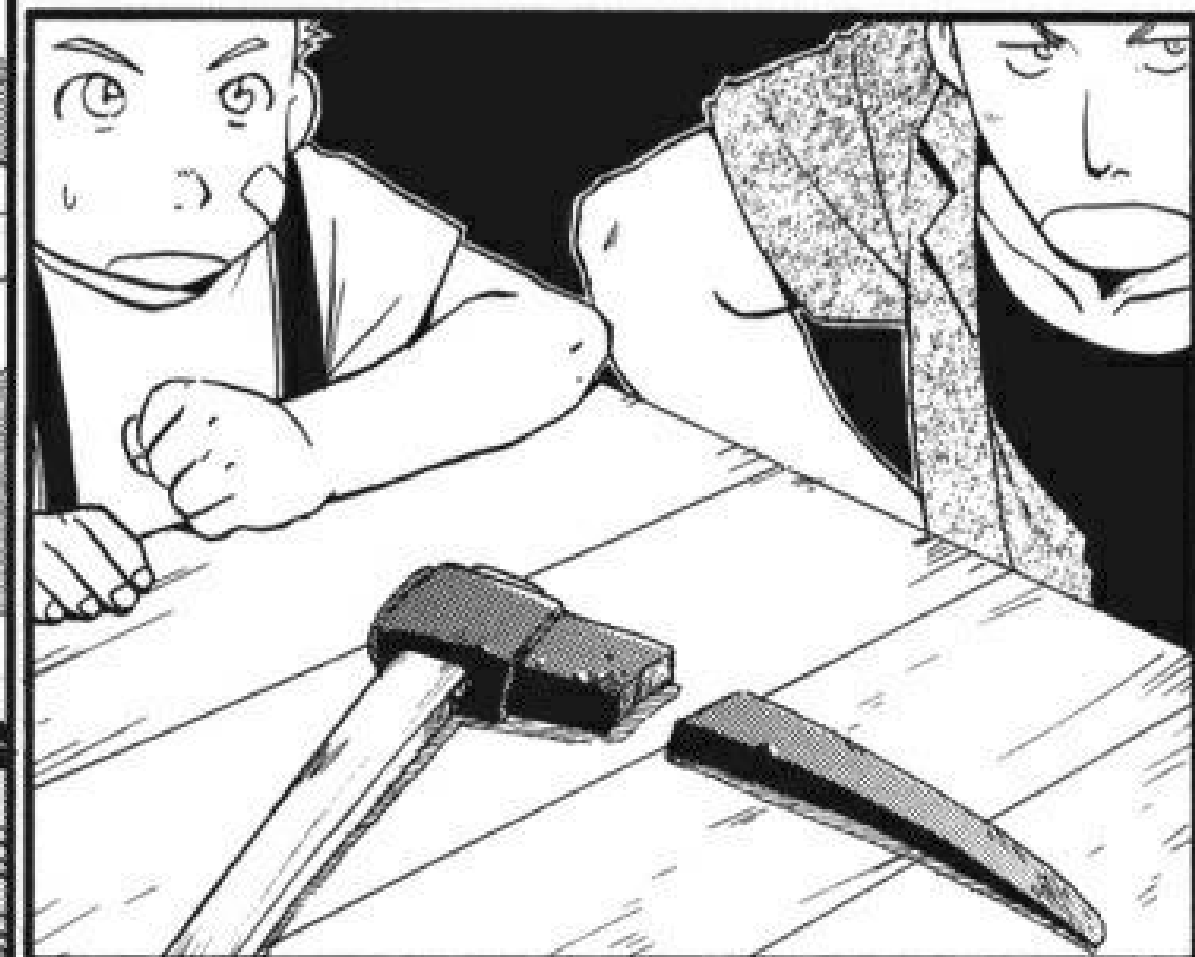


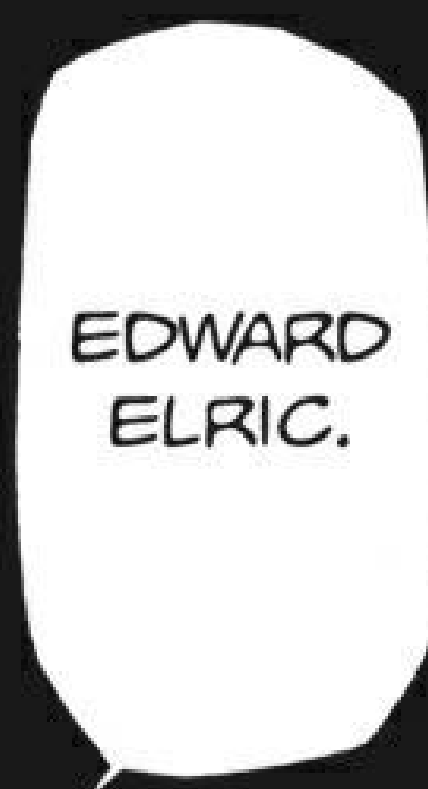
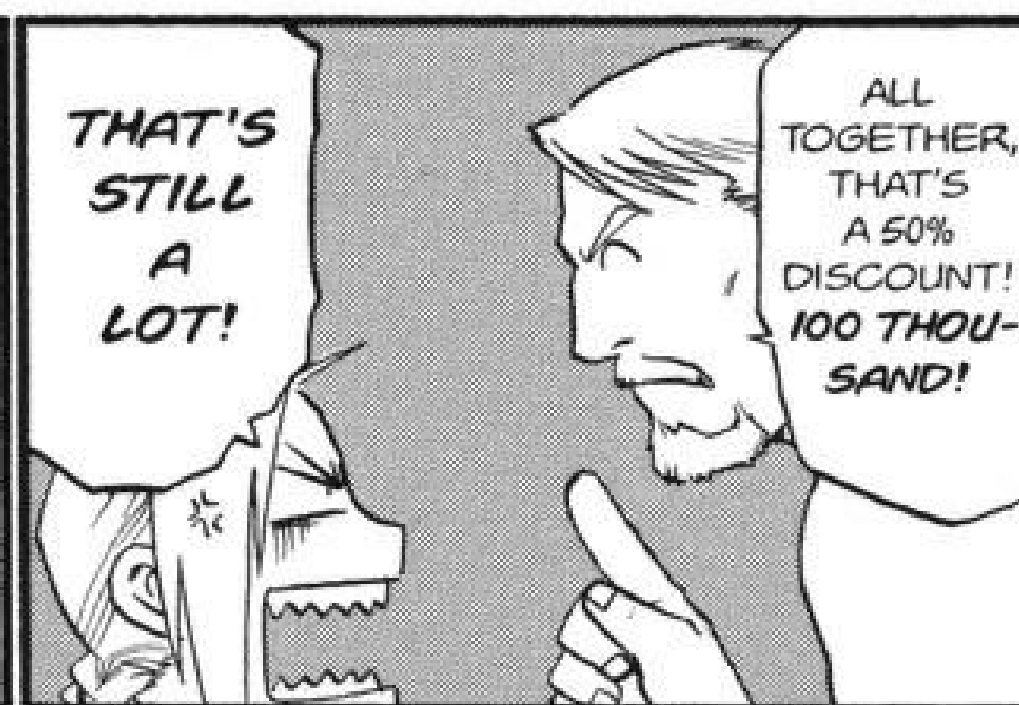
YOU'RE EVIL !!

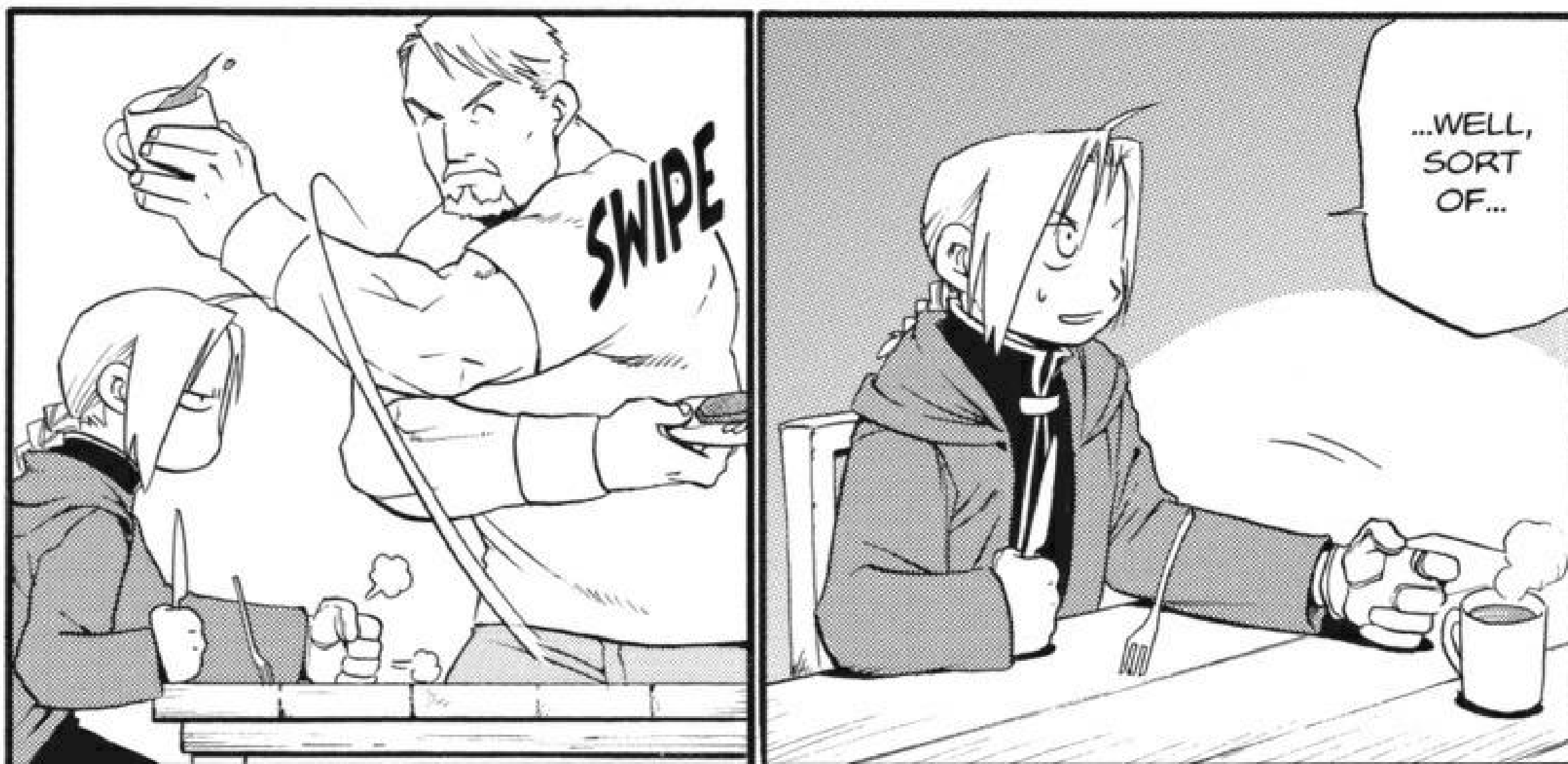
HEH HEH HEH HEH

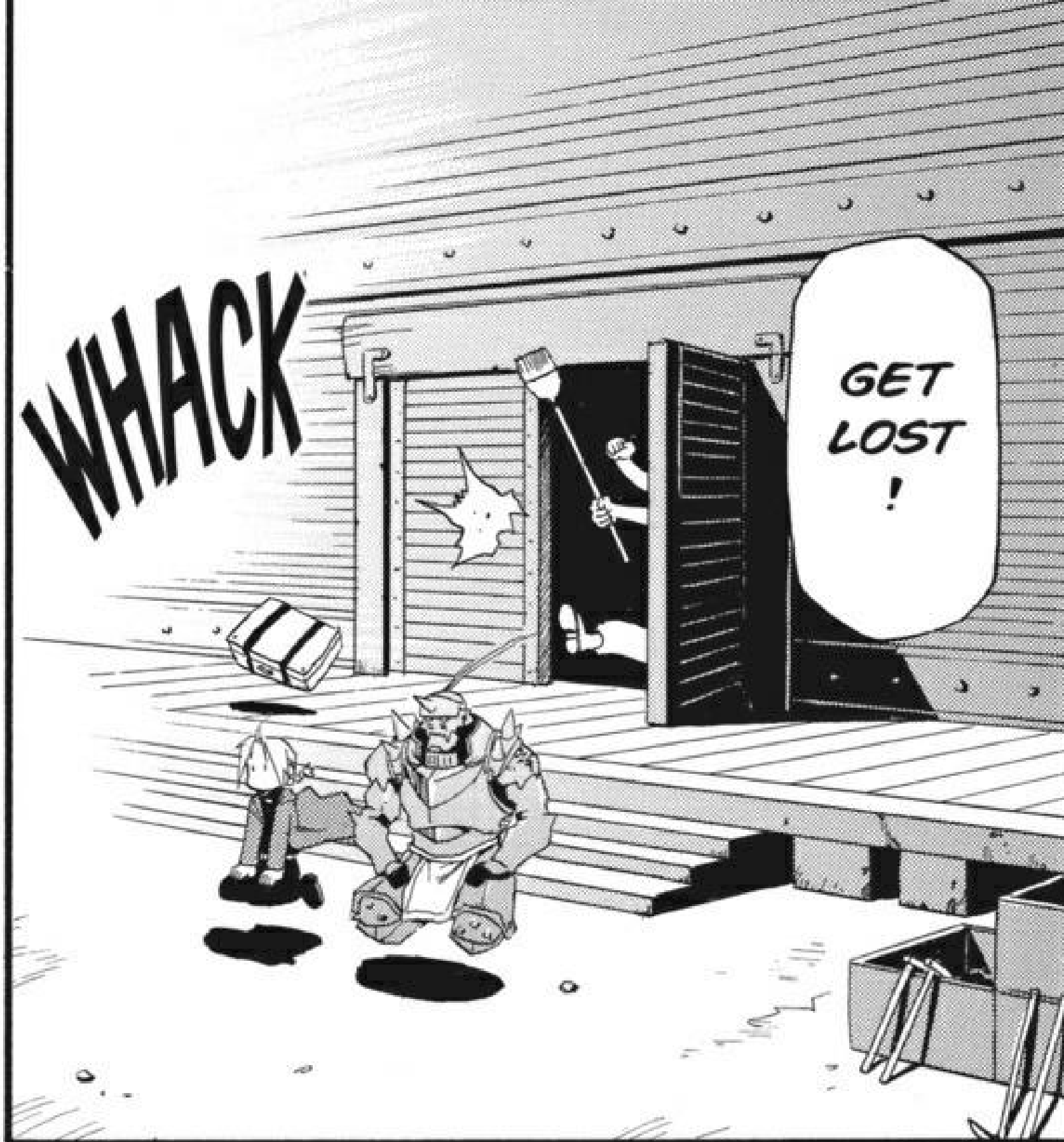
IF WE DON'T GET CAUGHT... WE WON'T GET CAUGHT.











GET
LOST
!



HEY,
WHAT'S
THE
BIG
DEAL
?!



OH,
THAT'S
FINE
THEN!
COME
ON IN!

YOU
TRAITOR
!!

UM,
I'M A
CIVILIAN.
I'M NOT
A "STATE"
ANY-
THING.

AAGH!



BLEAH!
WE DON'T
HAVE
FOOD OR
LODGINGS
FOR DOGS
OF THE
MILITARY!!

HEY!!
WE'RE
PAYING
CUSTOMERS
!!



CLOP

WHAT
A
LET-
DOWN...

CLOP

CLOP

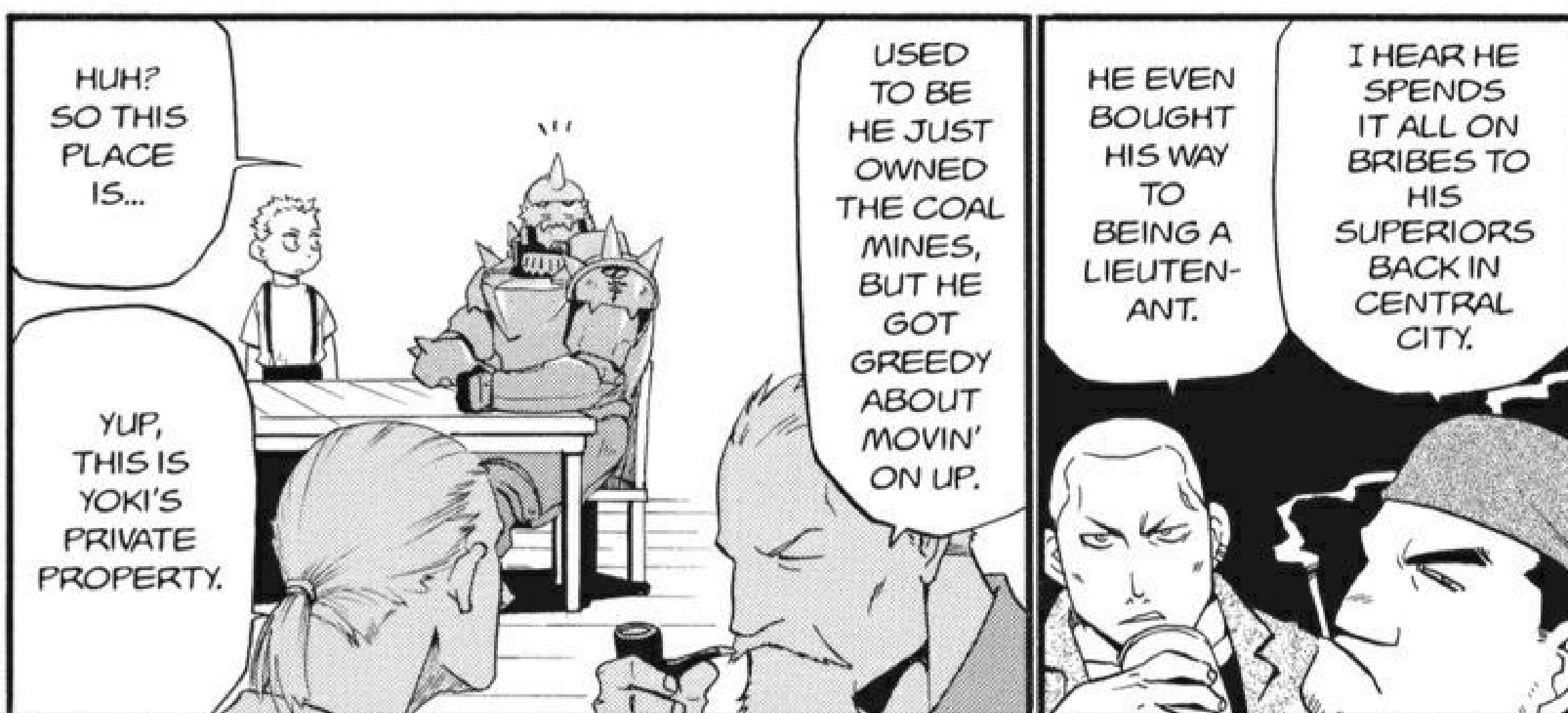
MAN,
JUST
WHEN I
THOUGHT
WE HAD
A PAYING
GUEST...



THIS TOWN'S UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF LIEUTENANT YOKI, BUT ALL HE CARES ABOUT IS MAKING MONEY.

OF COURSE. EVERYONE AROUND HERE HATES SOLDIERS.

STATE ALCHEMISTS AREN'T TOO POPULAR HERE, ARE THEY?



HUH? SO THIS PLACE IS...

YUP, THIS IS YOKI'S PRIVATE PROPERTY.

USED TO BE HE JUST OWNED THE COAL MINES, BUT HE GOT GREEDY ABOUT MOVIN' ON UP.

HE EVEN BOUGHT HIS WAY TO BEING A LIEUTENANT.

I HEAR HE SPENDS IT ALL ON BRIBES TO HIS SUPERIORS BACK IN CENTRAL CITY.

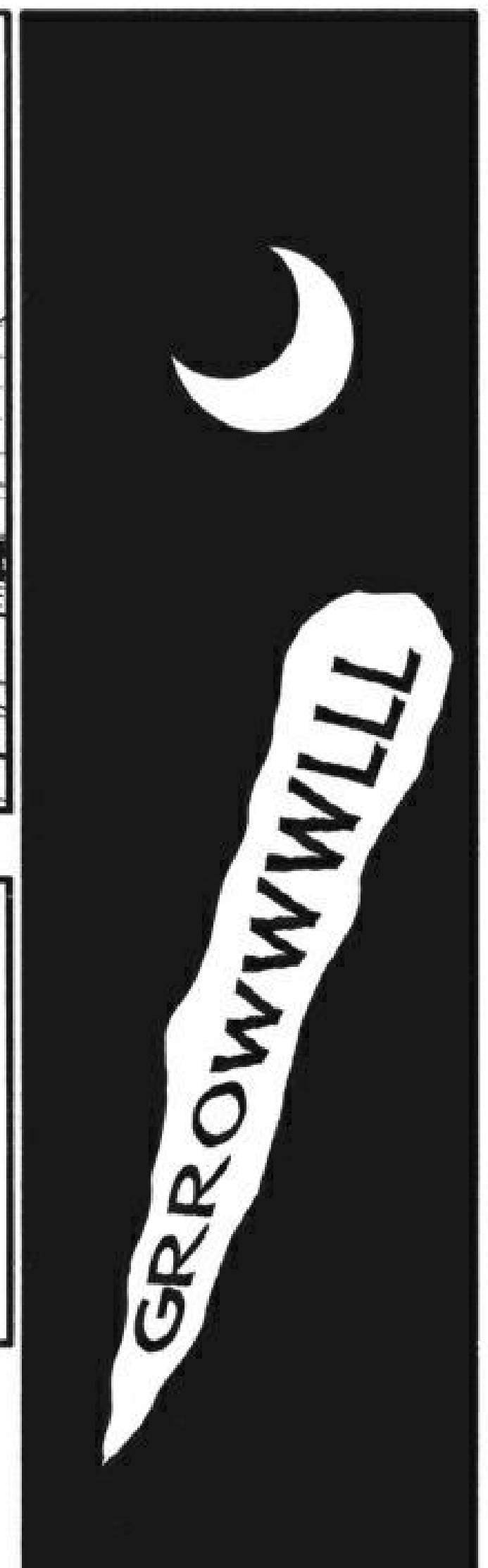
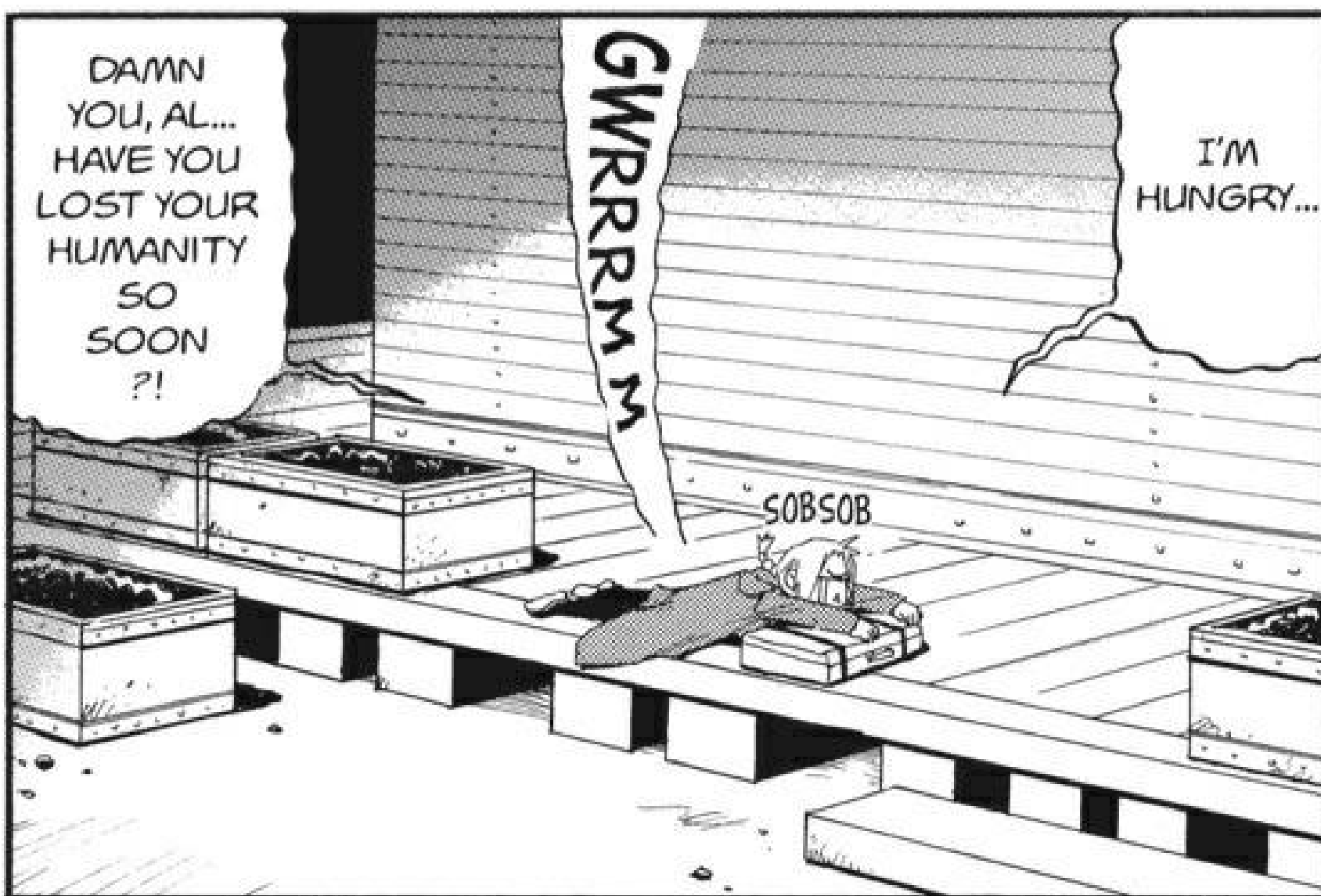


AND THEN THERE'S THE STATE ALCHEMISTS.

SEE? IT SUCKS, HUH?

EVEN IF WE COMPLAIN TO SOMEONE HIGHER UP ON THE CHAIN, YOKI BRIBES THEM ALL, SO **THEY** WON'T HELP!

THAT RAT OWNS EVERYTHING IN THIS TOWN! WE DON'T GET PAID ENOUGH TO GET BY!



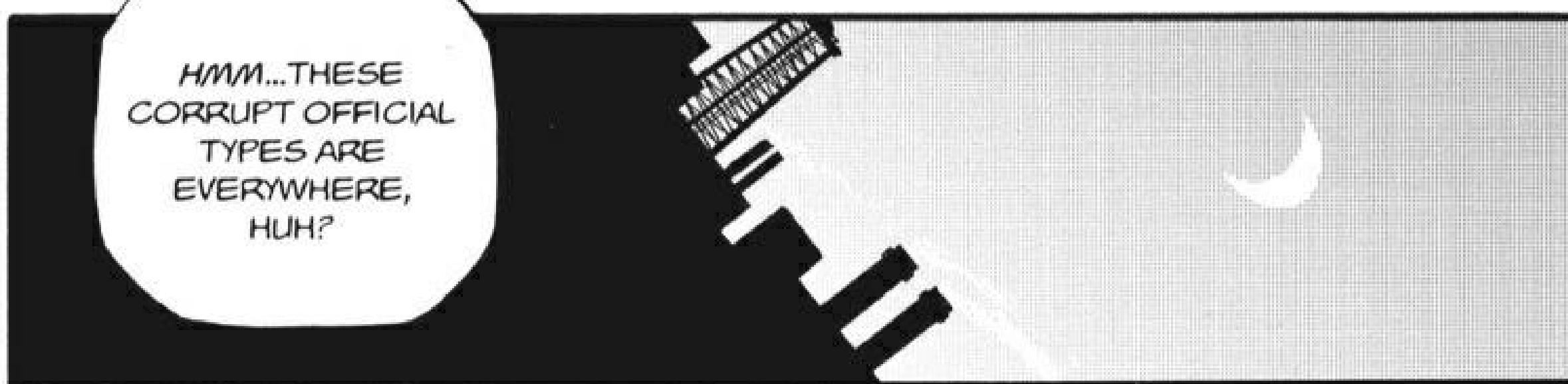


SHEESH,
YOU'RE
SO
PREDICT-
ABLE.

DEAR
BROTHER
!



I SNUCK
OUT WITH
THE FOOD
THEY GAVE
ME.



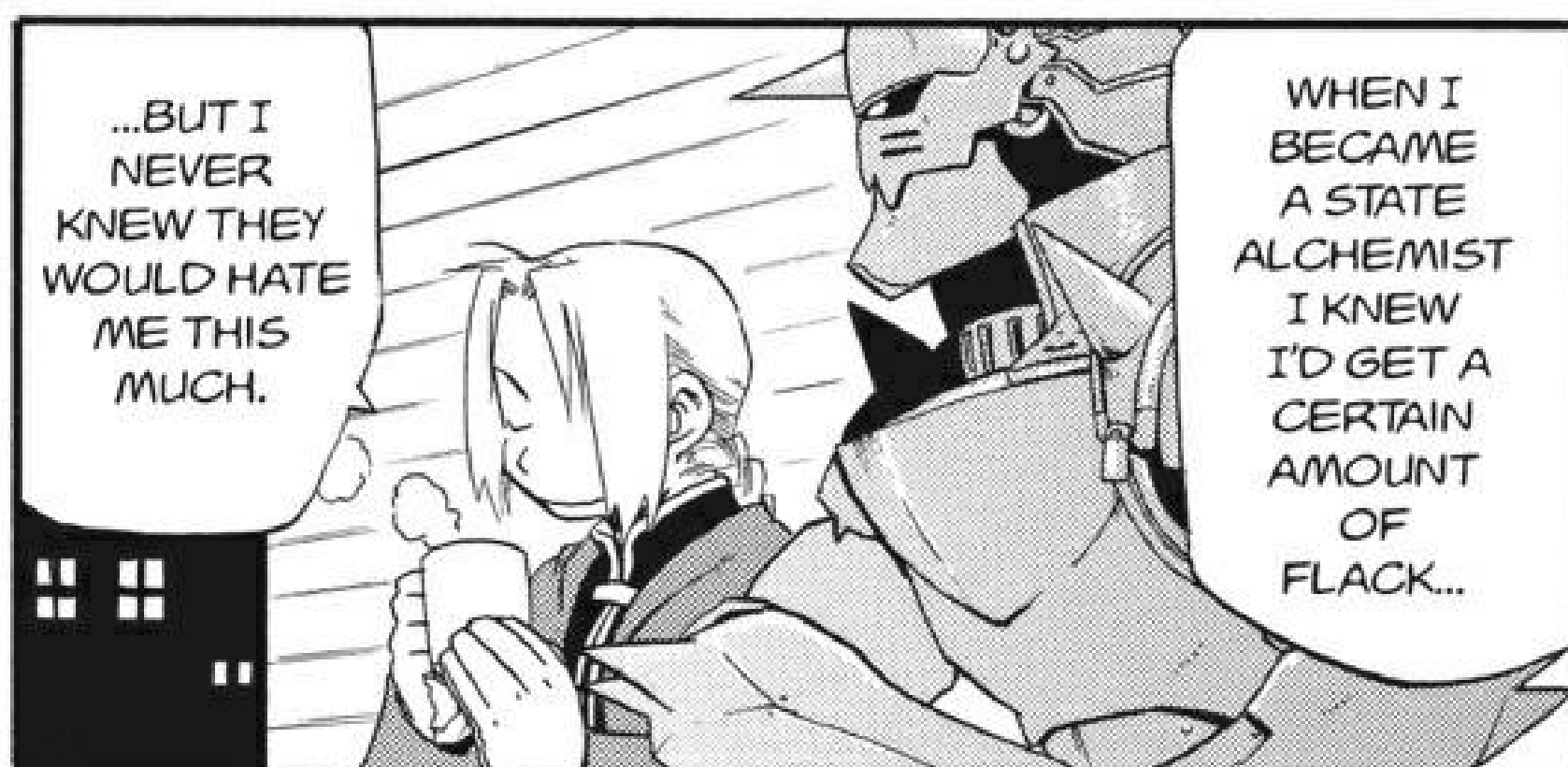
HMM...THESE
CORRUPT OFFICIAL
TYPES ARE
EVERYWHERE,
HUH?



... I
SEE.

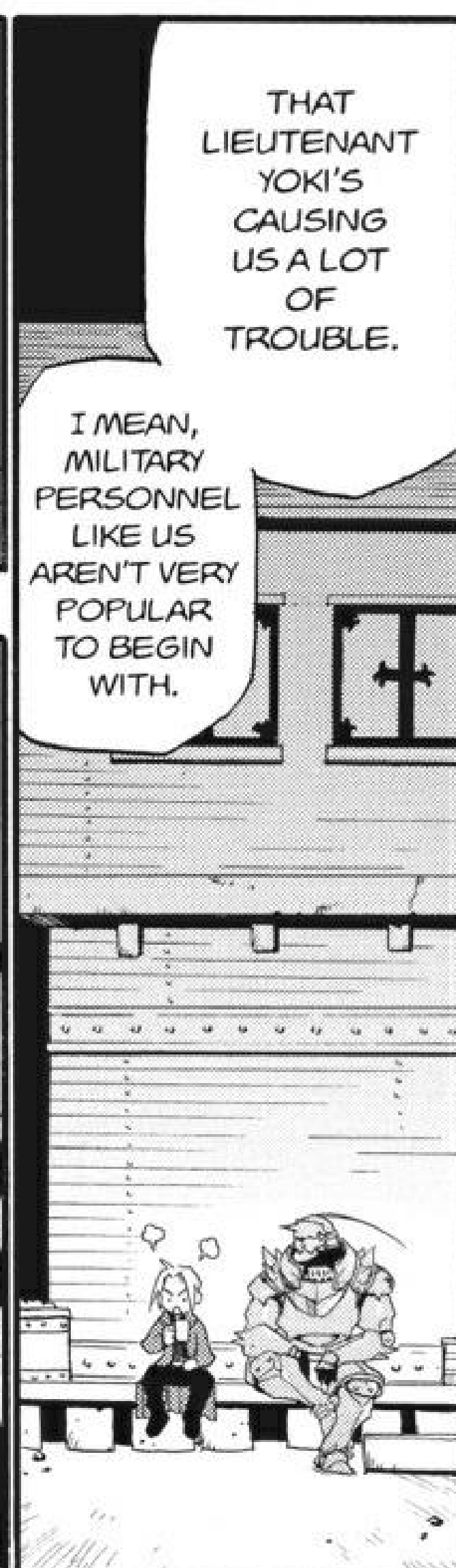


I GUESS,
THANKS TO
THIS GUY,
THEY DON'T
EVEN GET
ENOUGH
FOOD
SUPPLIES.



...BUT I NEVER KNEW THEY WOULD HATE ME THIS MUCH.

WHEN I BECAME A STATE ALCHEMIST I KNEW I'D GET A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF FLACK...



THAT LIEUTENANT YOKI'S CAUSING US A LOT OF TROUBLE.

I MEAN, MILITARY PERSONNEL LIKE US AREN'T VERY POPULAR TO BEGIN WITH.



MAYBE I SHOULD GET CERTIFIED AS A STATE ALCHEMIST TOO.

...



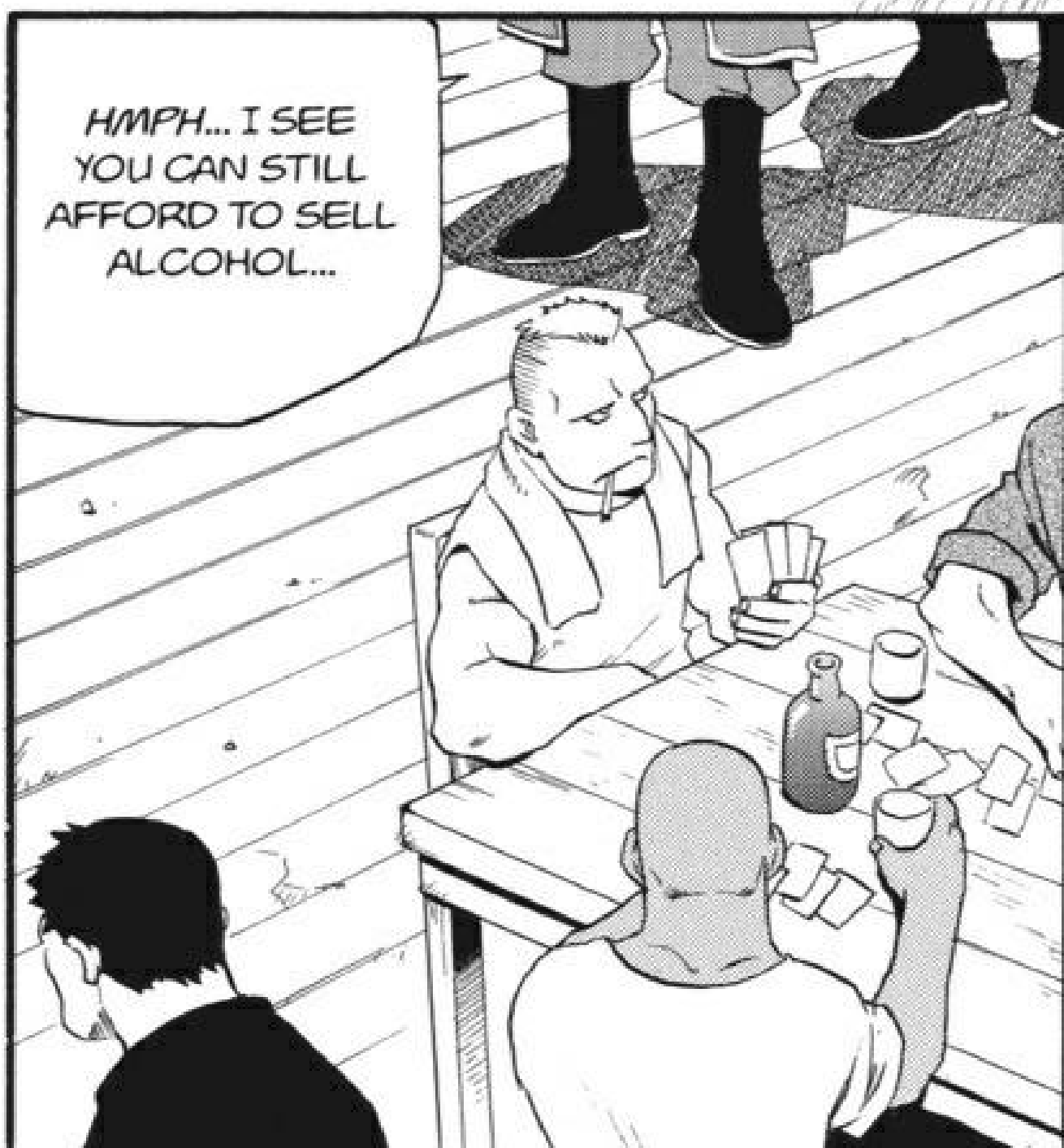
"DOGS OF THE MILITARY," HUH?

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO RESPOND TO THAT.

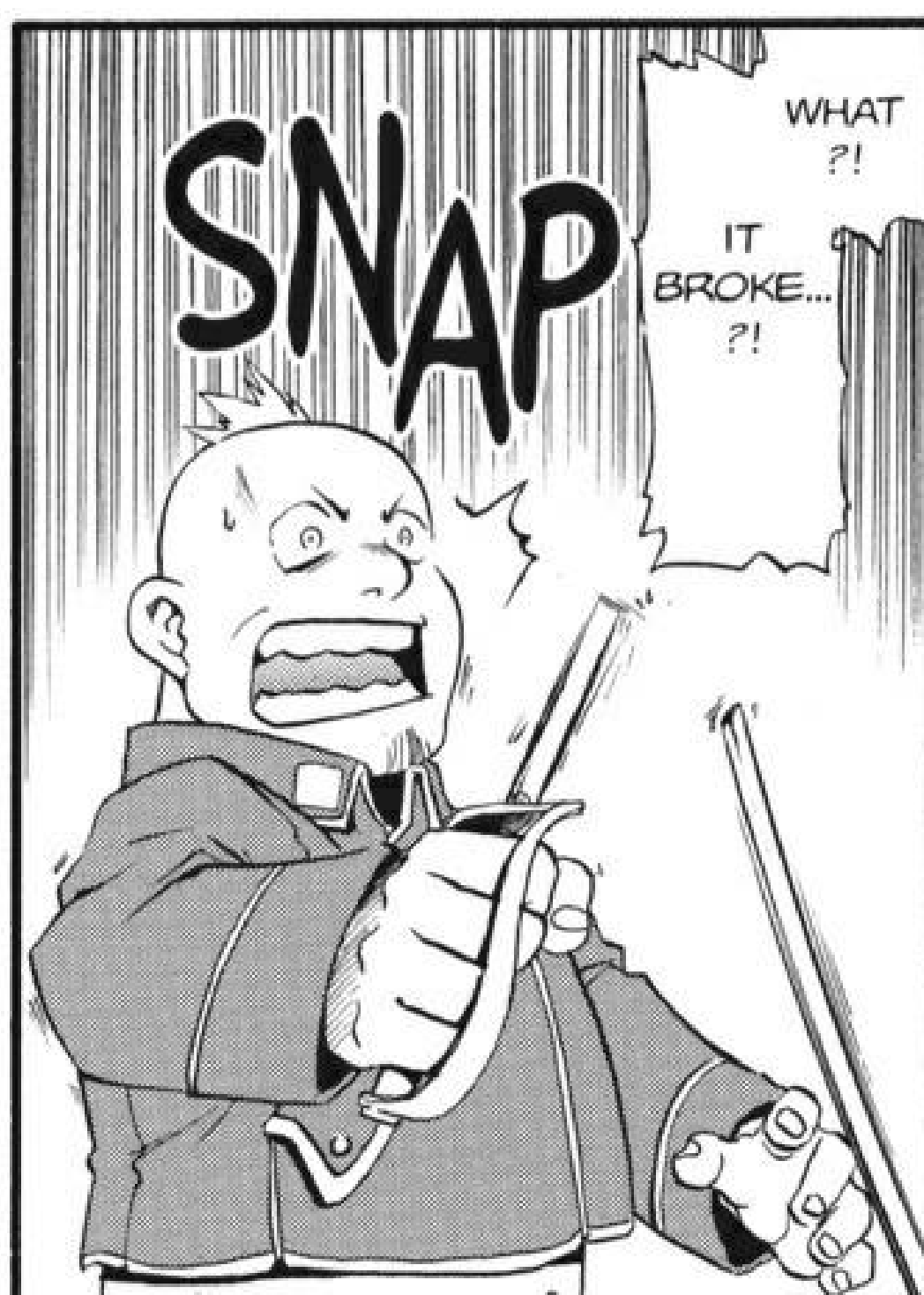


IT'S NOT WORTH IT! ONE PERSON SITTING ON THIS BED OF NEEDLES IS ENOUGH!







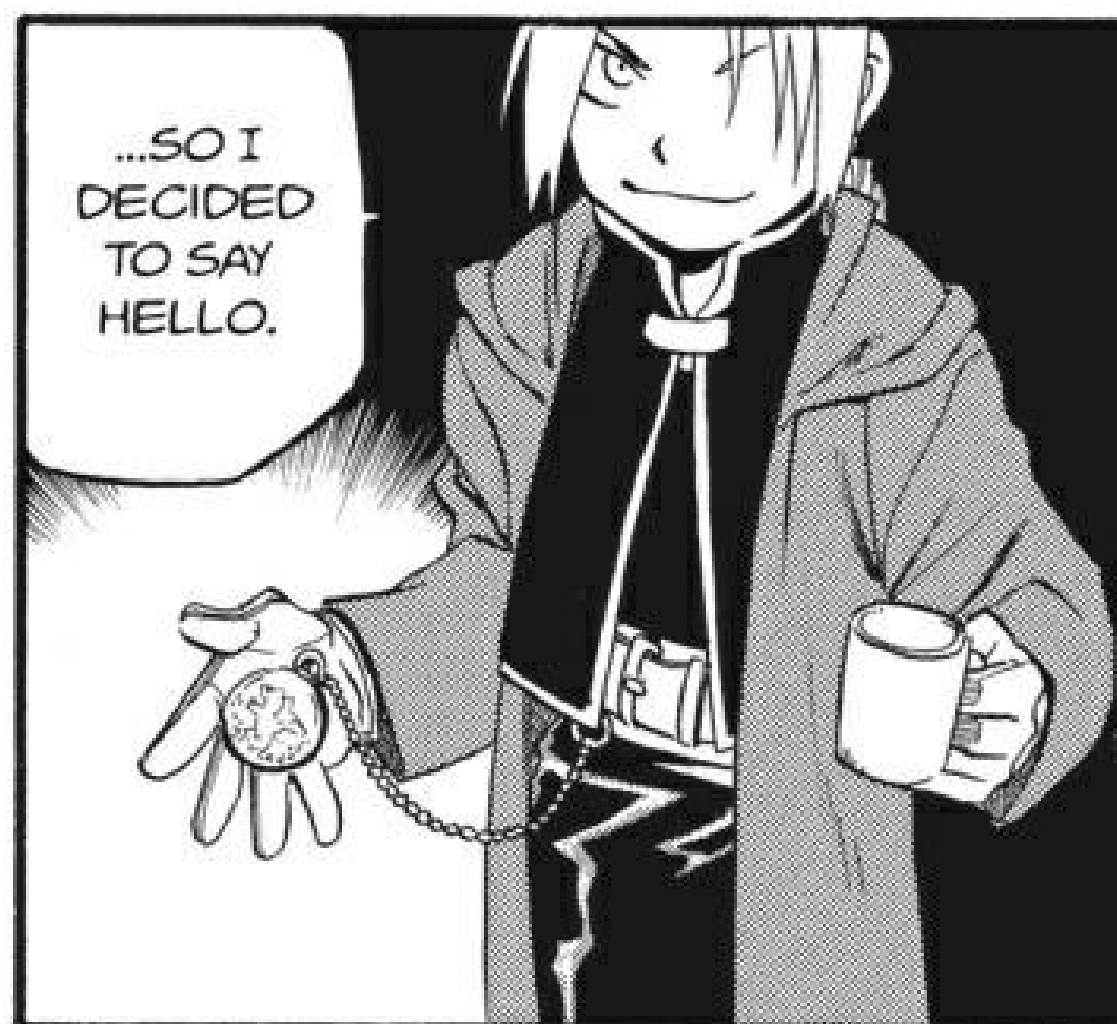




JUST A KID PASSING THROUGH.

Huh? Huh?

WH... WHERE DID THIS KID COME FROM !?

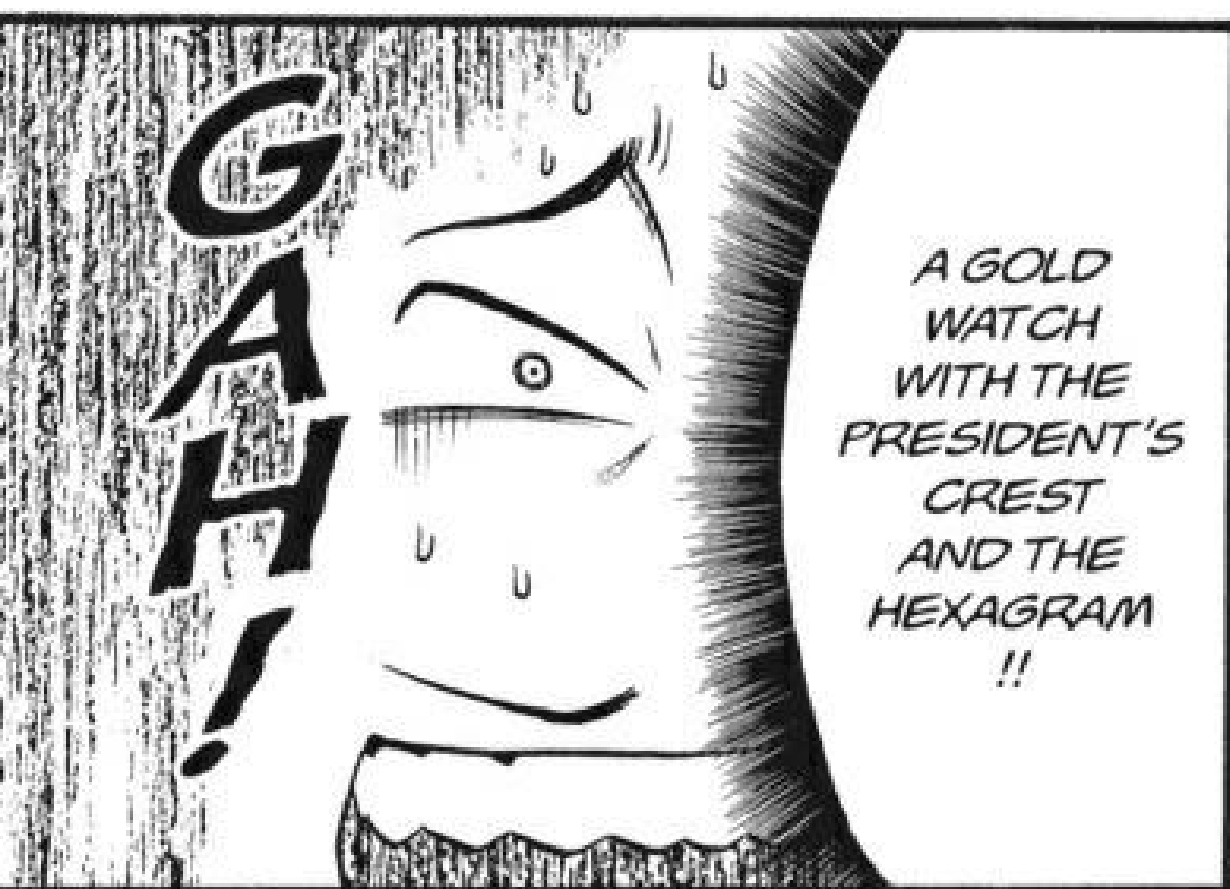


...SO I DECIDED TO SAY HELLO.



WELL, I HEARD THAT THE LIEUTENANT WAS GONNA BE HERE...

THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS! STAY OUT!



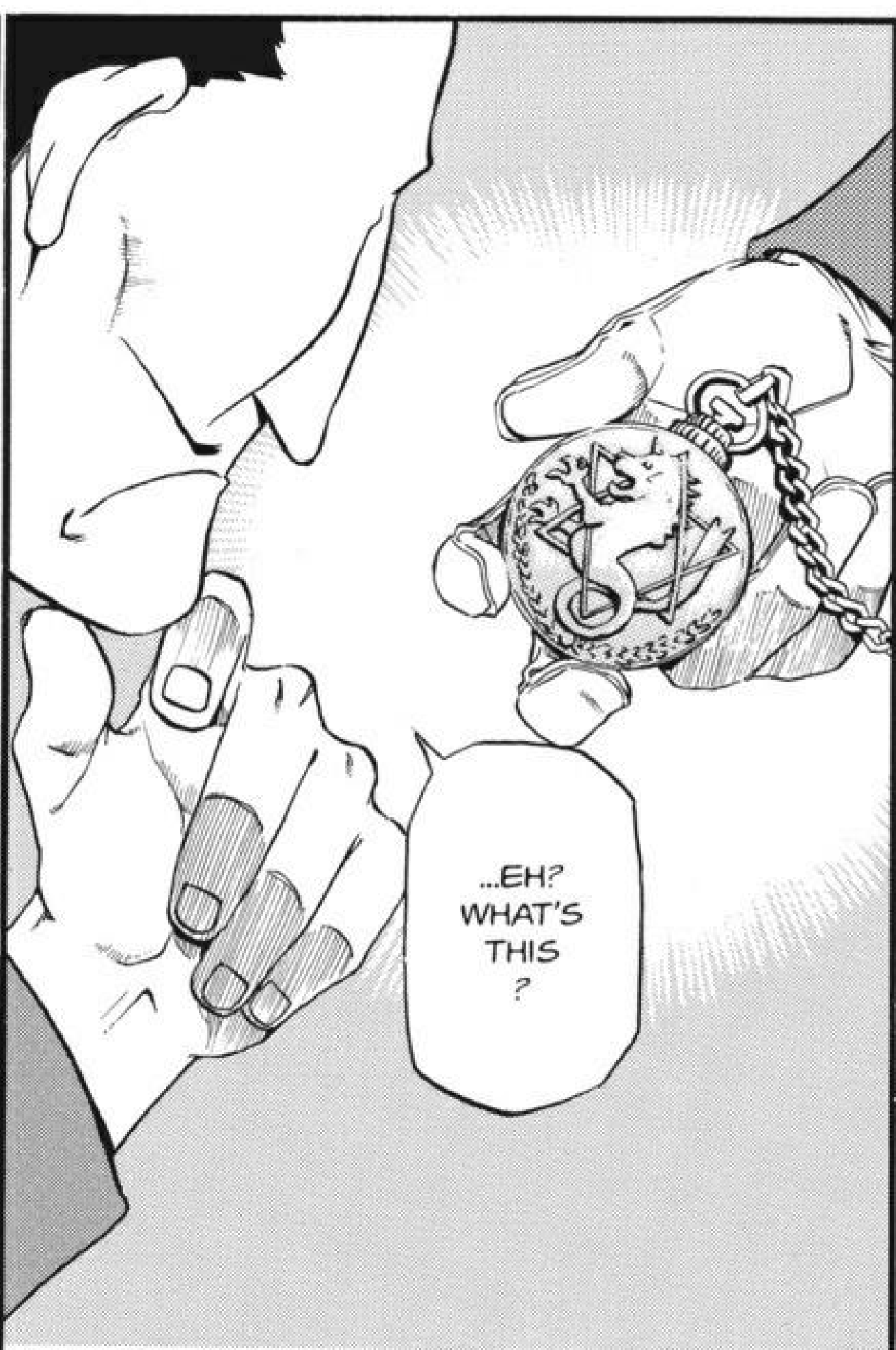
A GOLD WATCH WITH THE PRESIDENT'S CREST AND THE HEXAGRAM !!



YOU IDIOT!

BONK

LIEUTENANT, WHO IS THIS BRAT...? OW.

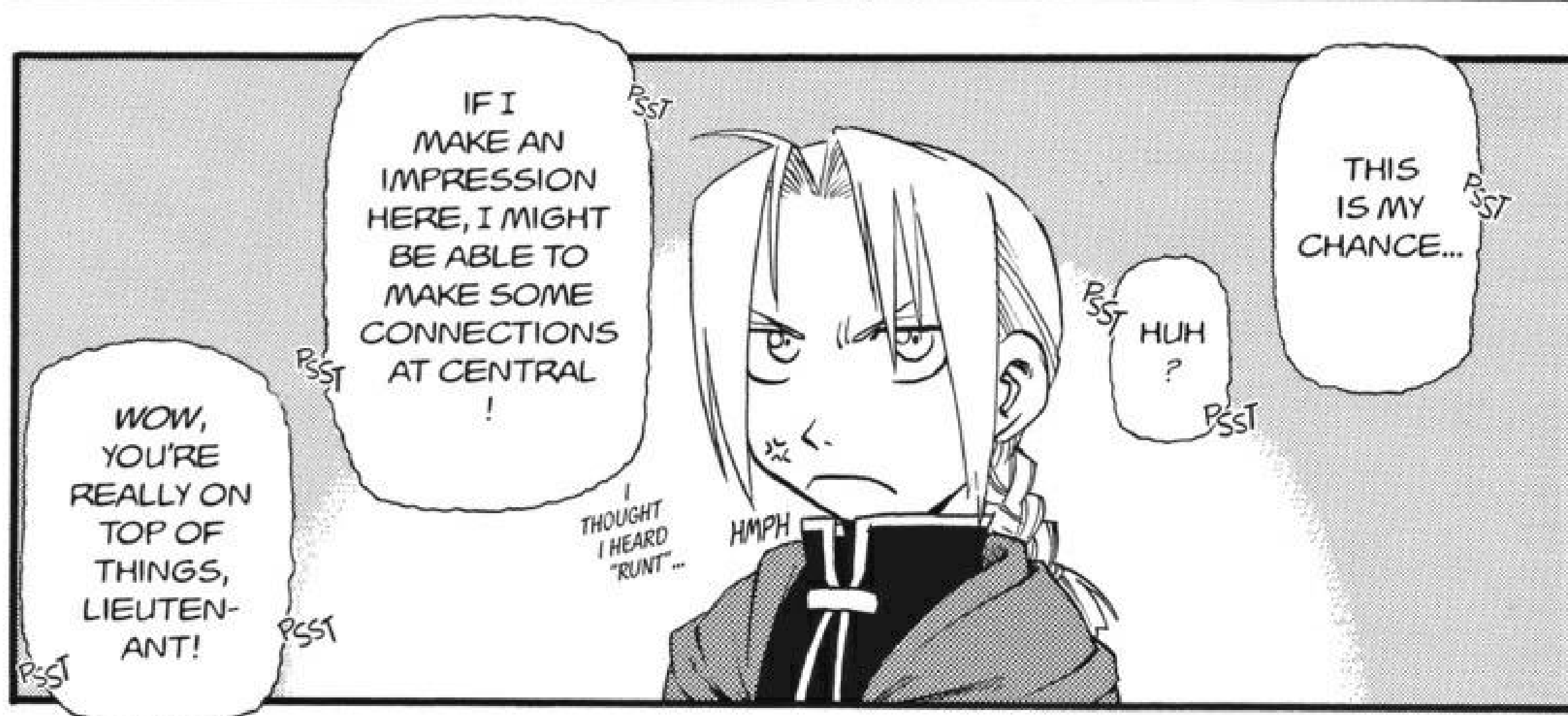


...EH? WHAT'S THIS ?



YOU'RE
SERIOUS?
NOT
THAT
LITTLE
RUNT!?

DON'T YOU
KNOW WHAT
A STATE
ALCHEMIST
IS?! THEY
WORK
DIRECTLY
FOR THE
PRESIDENT
!



IF I
MAKE AN
IMPRESSION
HERE, I MIGHT
BE ABLE TO
MAKE SOME
CONNECTIONS
AT CENTRAL
!

THIS
IS MY
CHANCE...

WOW,
YOU'RE
REALLY ON
TOP OF
THINGS,
LIEUTEN-
ANT!

HUH
?

HMPH

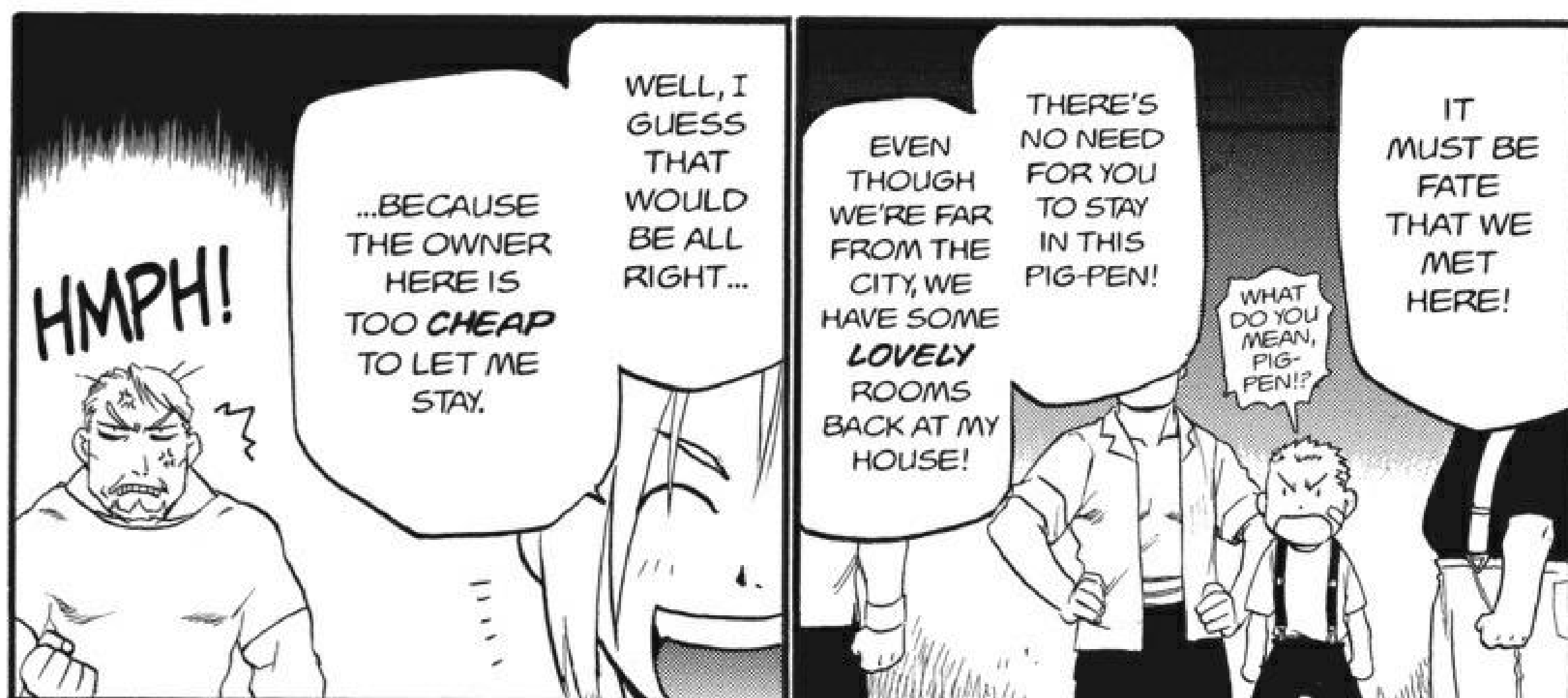
I
THOUGHT
I HEARD
"RUNT"...



MY NAME IS
YOKI, AND I'M
IN CHARGE OF
THIS TOWN.

SLITHER

I'M SORRY
IF MY SUB-
ORDINATES
WERE
IMPOLITE.



HMPH!

...BECAUSE
THE OWNER
HERE IS
TOO **CHEAP**
TO LET ME
STAY.

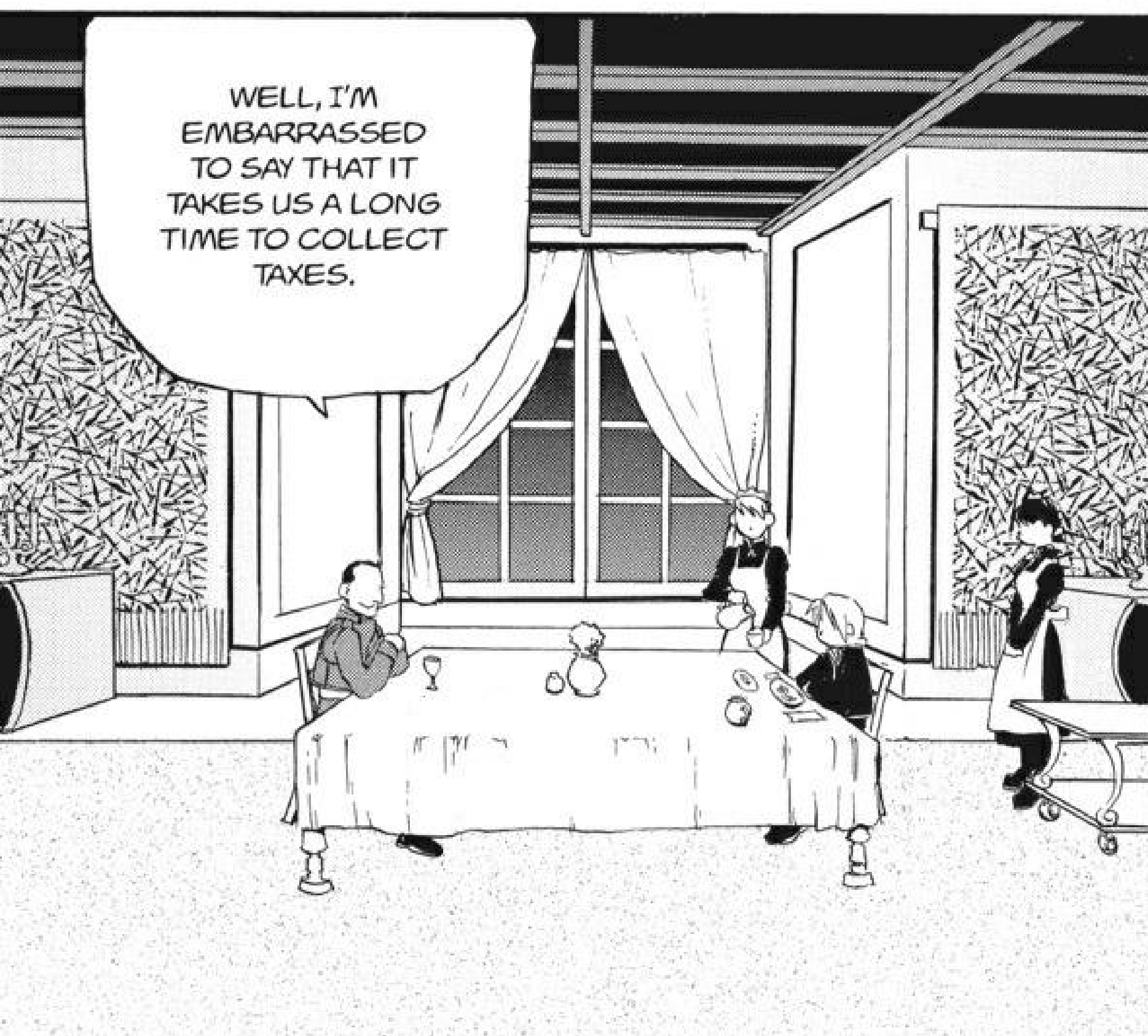
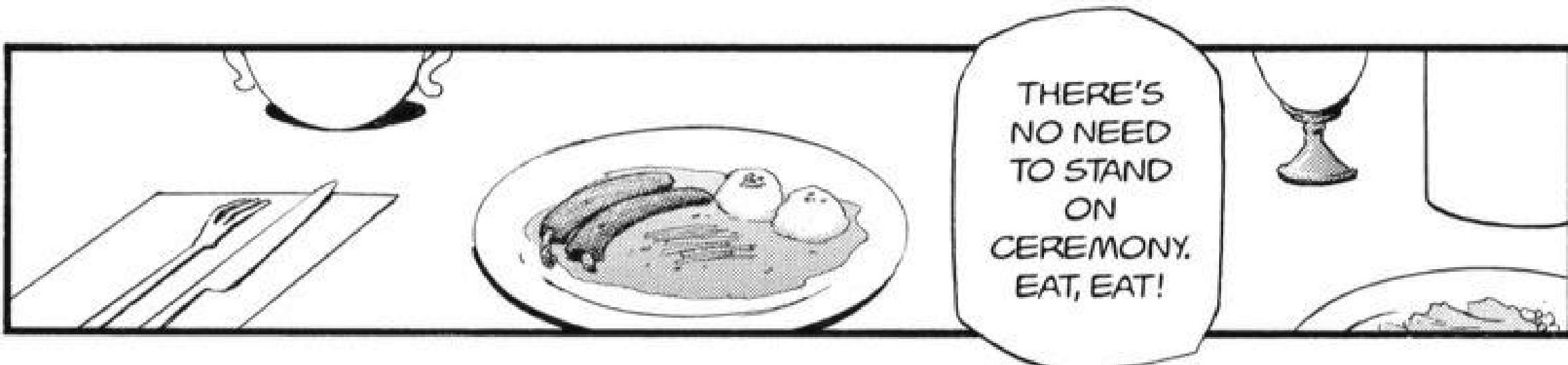
WELL, I
GUESS
THAT
WOULD
BE ALL
RIGHT...

EVEN
THOUGH
WE'RE FAR
FROM THE
CITY, WE
HAVE SOME
LOVELY
ROOMS
BACK AT MY
HOUSE!

THERE'S
NO NEED
FOR YOU
TO STAY
IN THIS
PIG-PEN!

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN,
PIG-
PEN!?!

IT
MUST BE
FATE
THAT WE
MET
HERE!



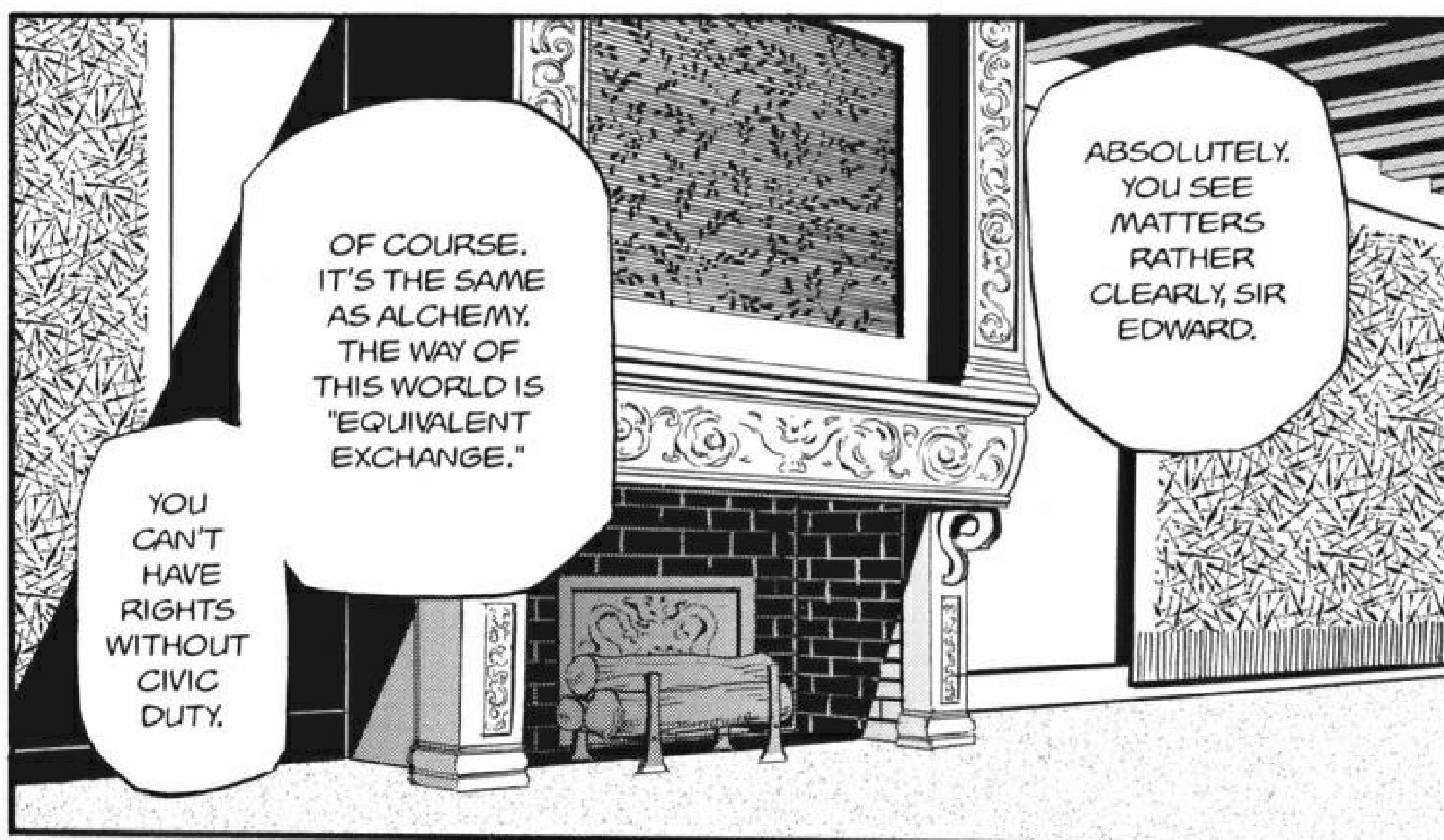


THE PEOPLE
PAY YOU TAXES
BECAUSE YOU
OWN THE
RIGHTS TO
THIS PLACE.
THAT'S HOW
IT WORKS,
ISN'T IT?



...AHA
HA HA.
IT'S ALL
VERY
EMBAR-
RASSING.

PLUS THERE
ARE MANY
THUGS LIKE
THE ONES
YOU SAW
EARLIER...



YOU
CAN'T
HAVE
RIGHTS
WITHOUT
CIVIC
DUTY.

OF COURSE.
IT'S THE SAME
AS ALCHEMY.
THE WAY OF
THIS WORLD IS
"EQUIVALENT
EXCHANGE."

ABSOLUTELY.
YOU SEE
MATTERS
RATHER
CLEARLY, SIR
EDWARD.



SO THAT
MEANS YOU'LL
ALSO ACCEPT
THIS AS THE
WAY OF THIS
WORLD...?

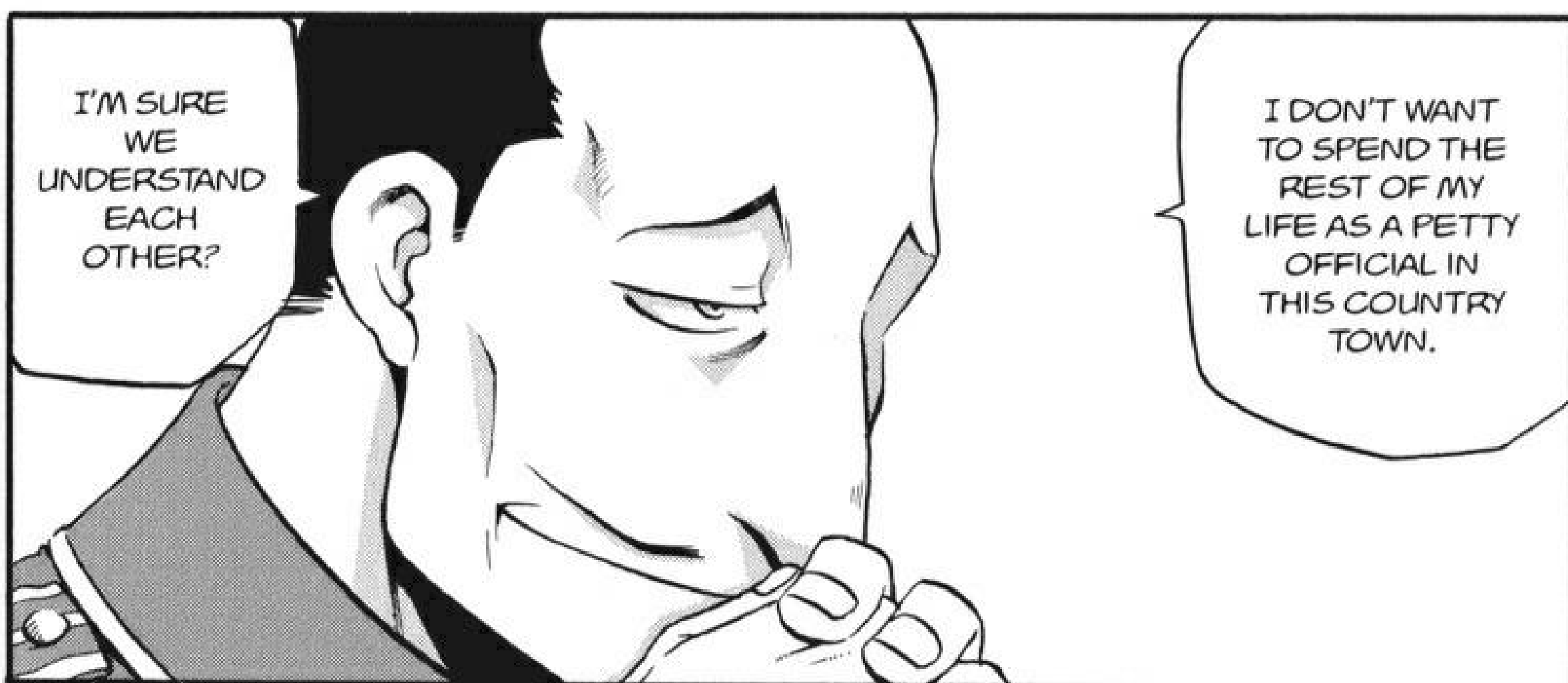
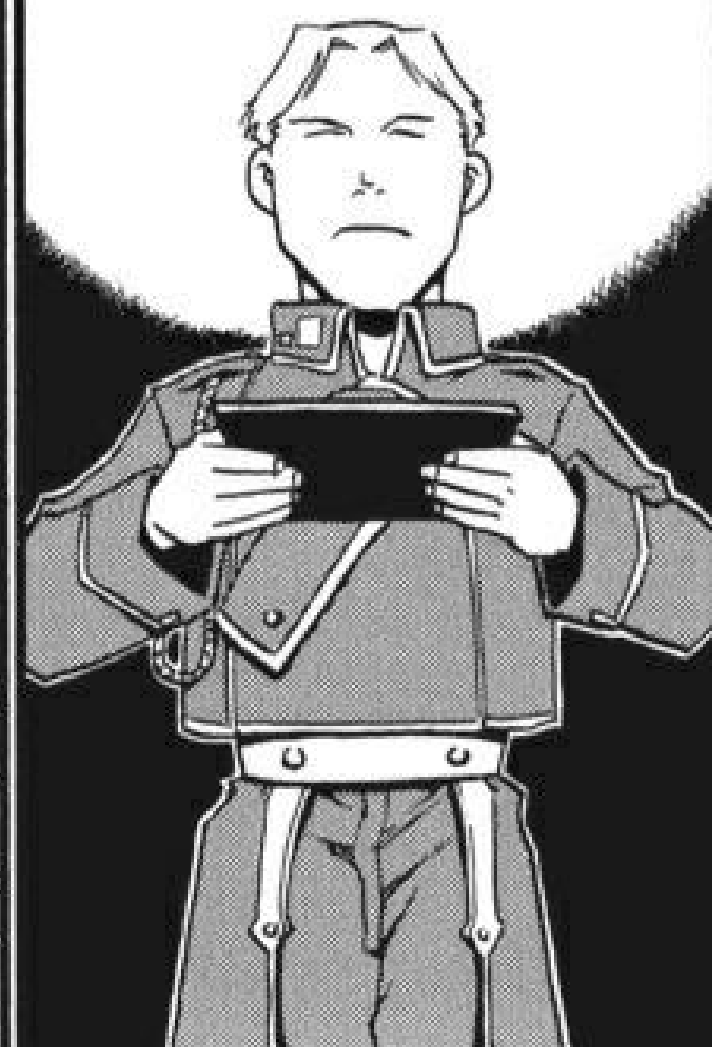


TRUE,
TRUE.

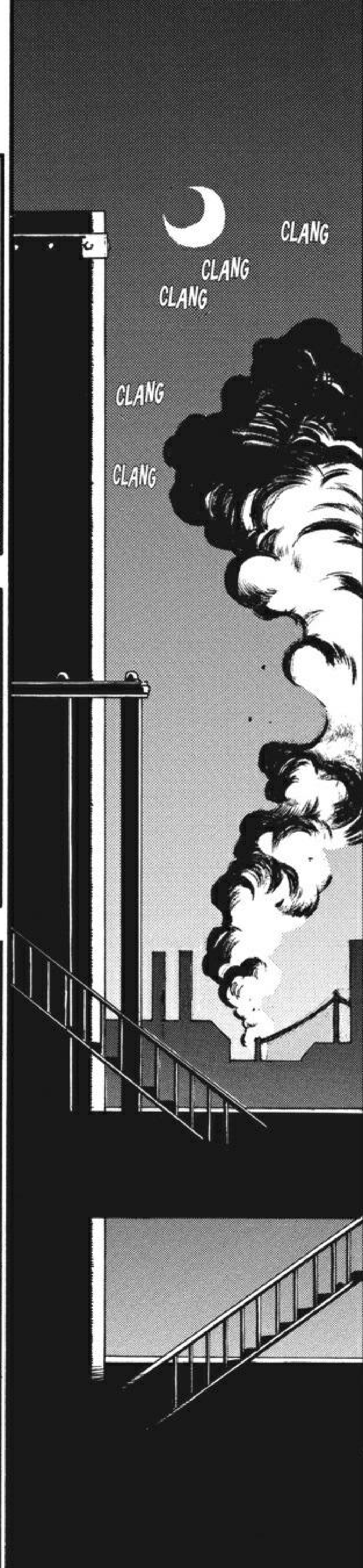
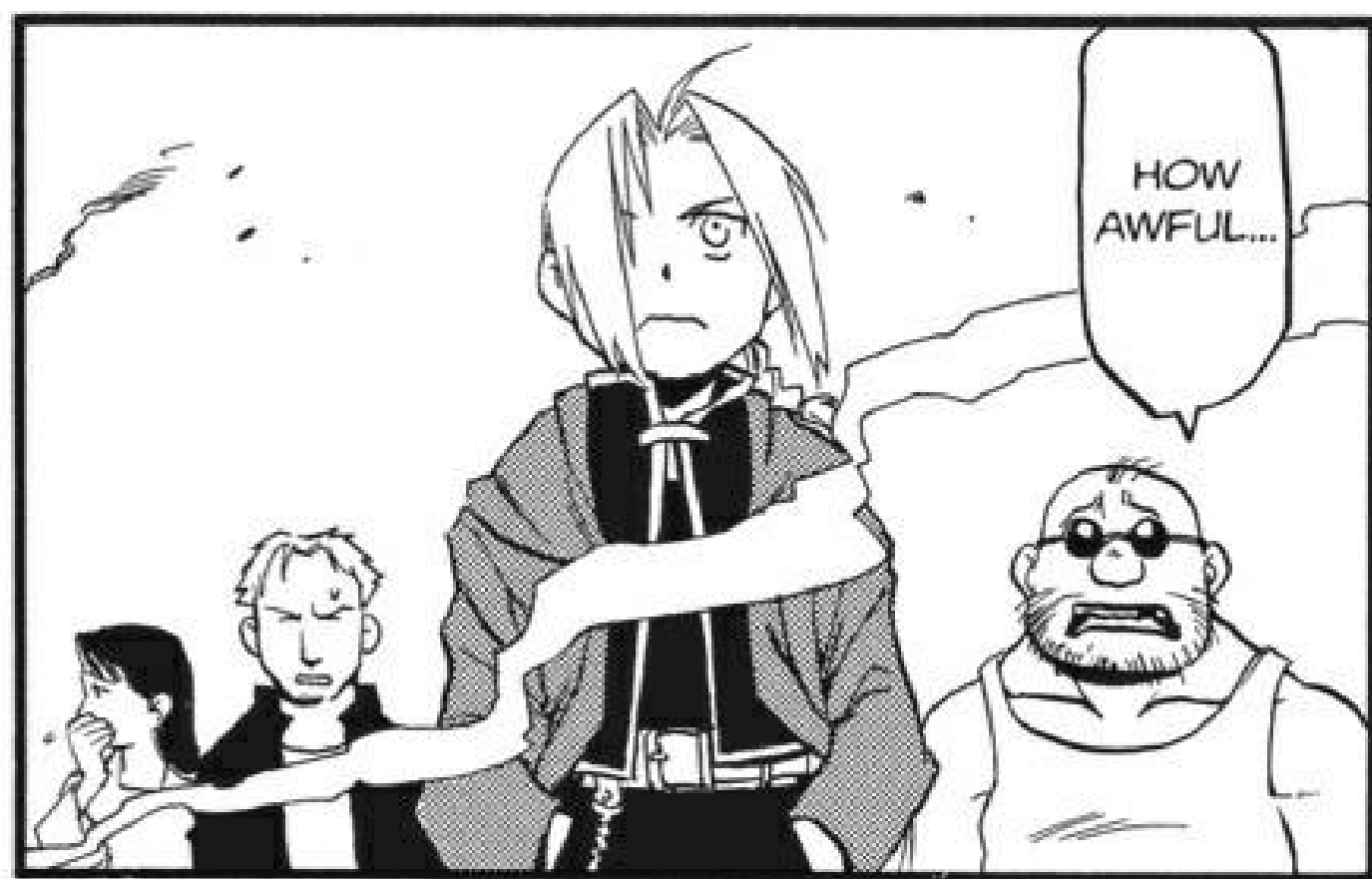
YES,
WELL
SPOKEN.

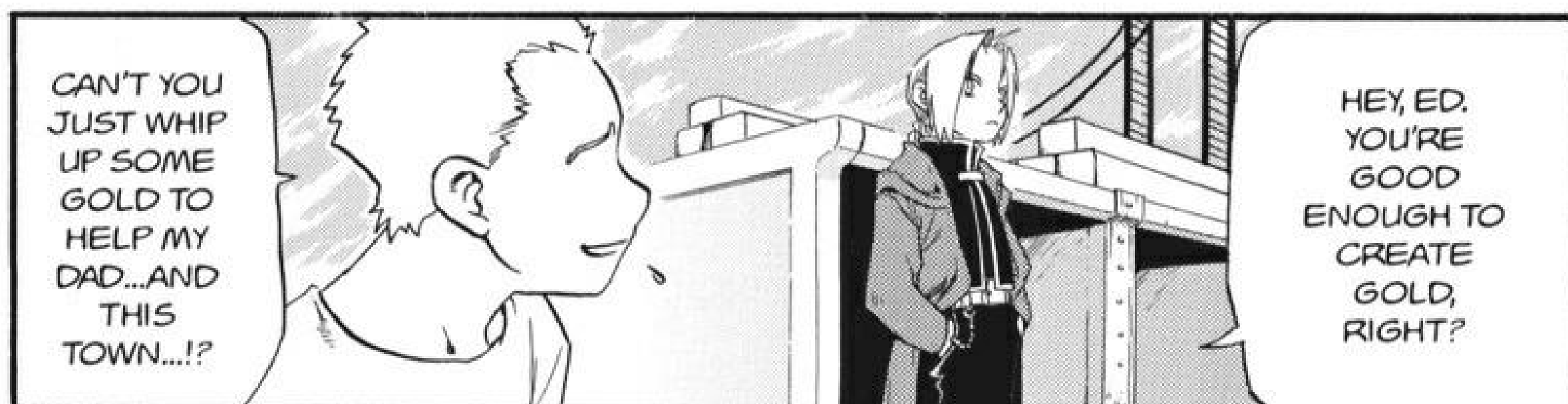
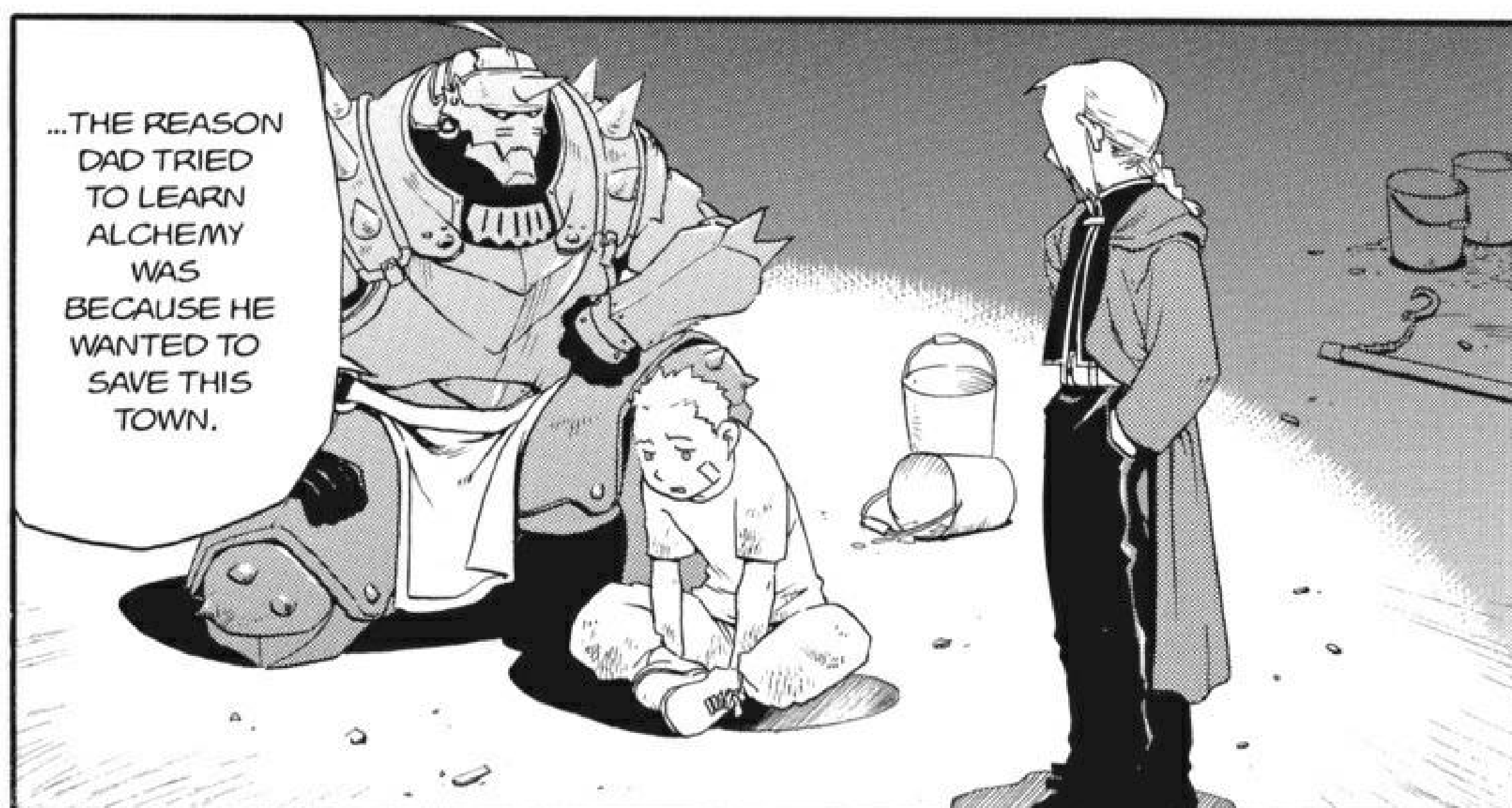
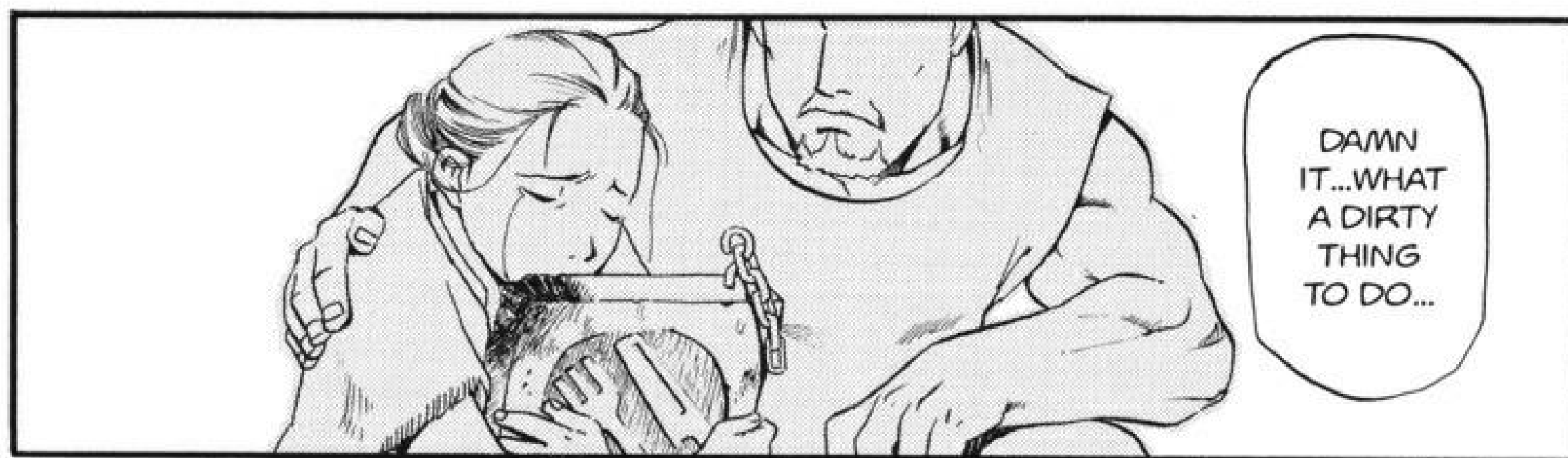


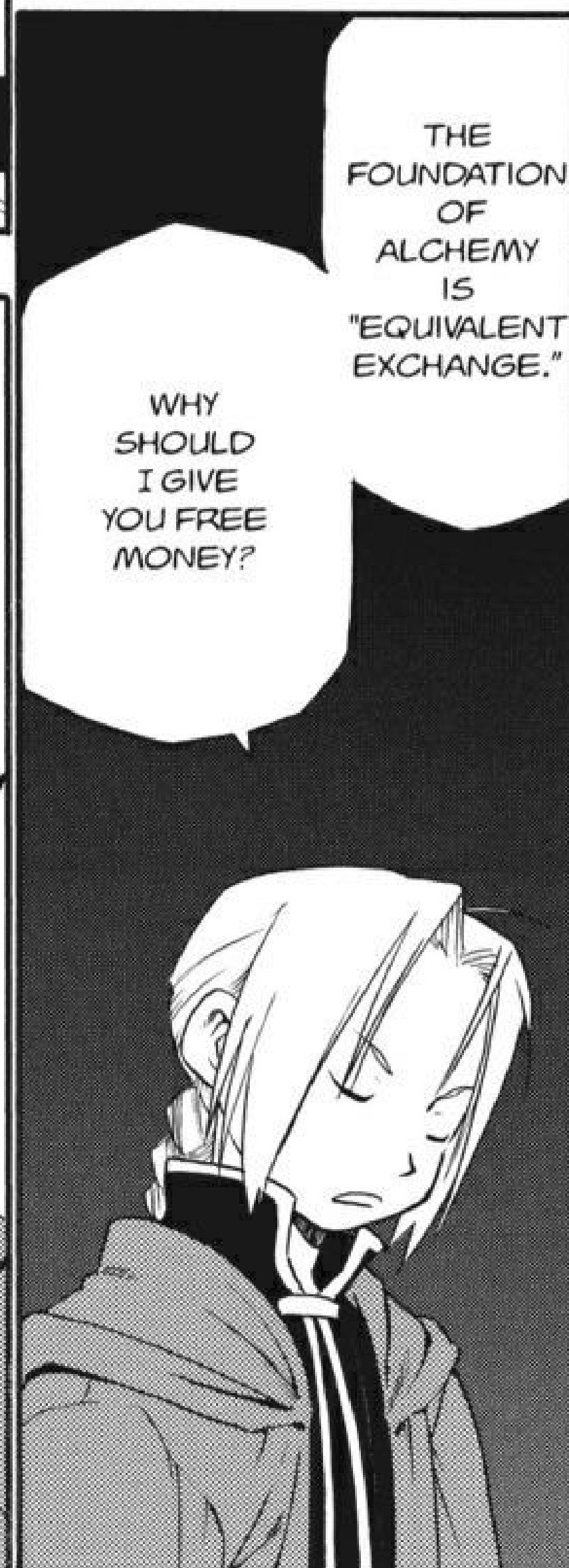
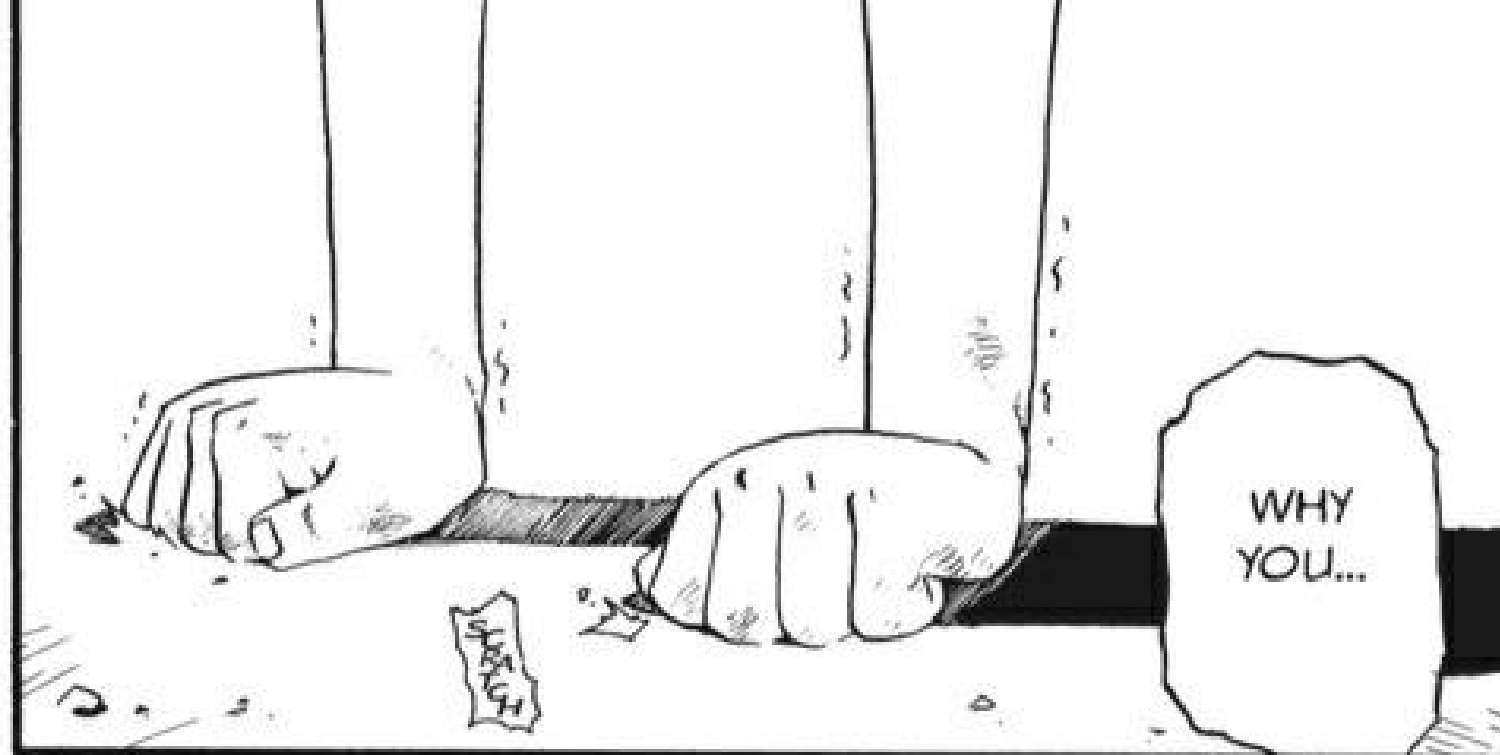
SIR EDWARD,
AS A STATE
ALCHEMIST
I IMAGINE
YOU MUST
HAVE SOME
INFLUENCE
WITH THOSE
HIGHER UP.

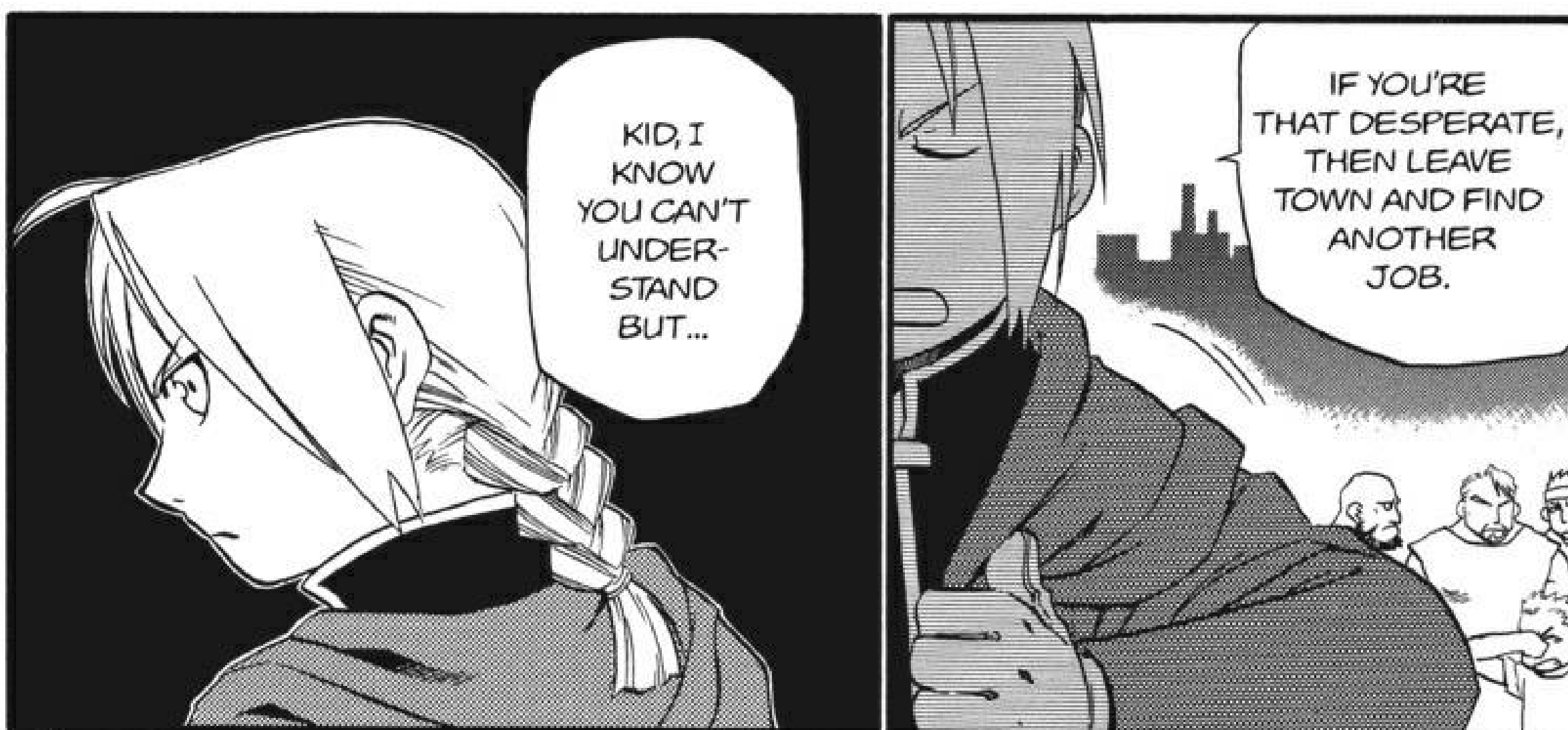


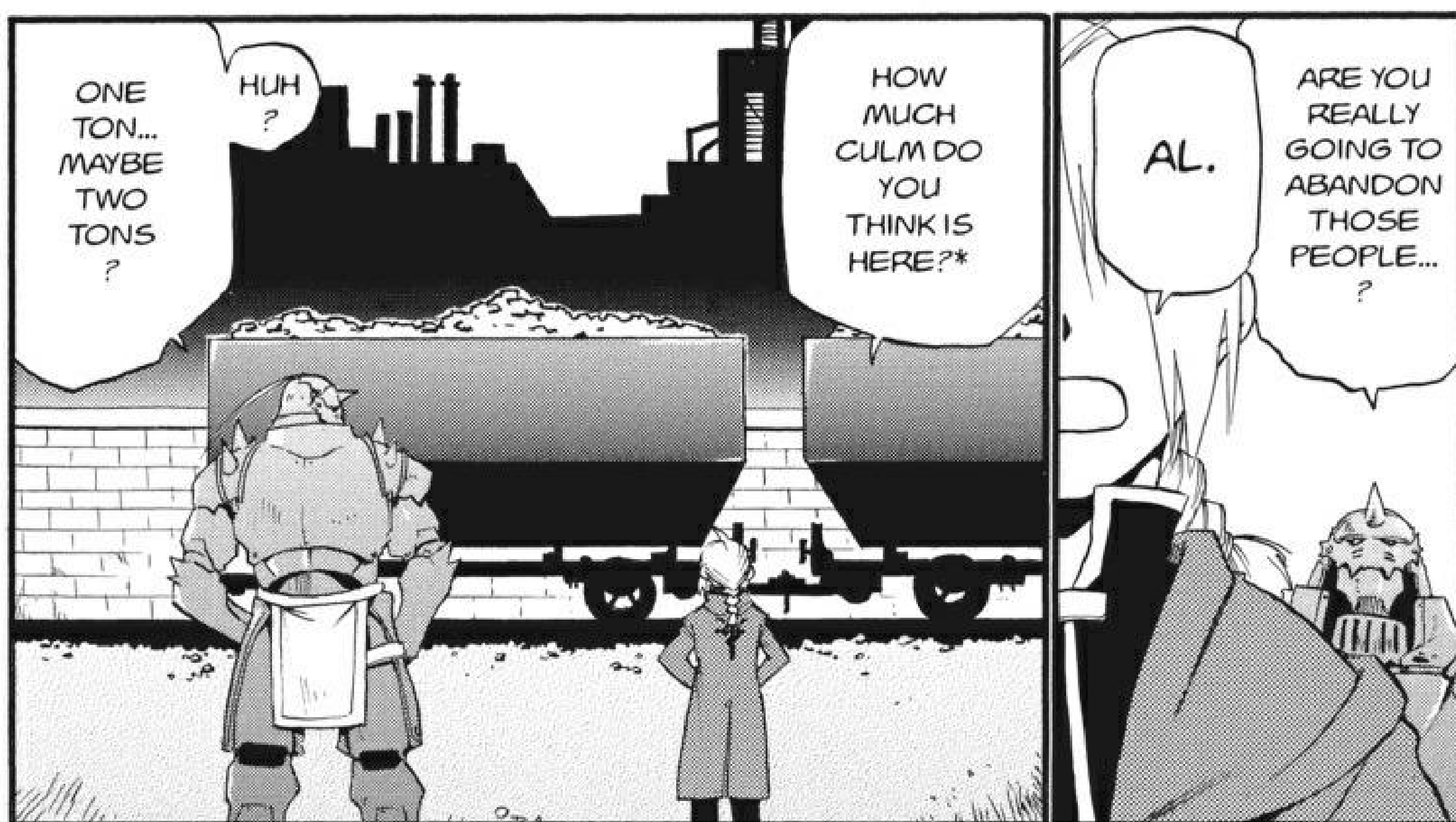












*CULM - WASTE FROM COAL MINES, INCLUDING FINE COAL, COAL DUST, AND DIRT.





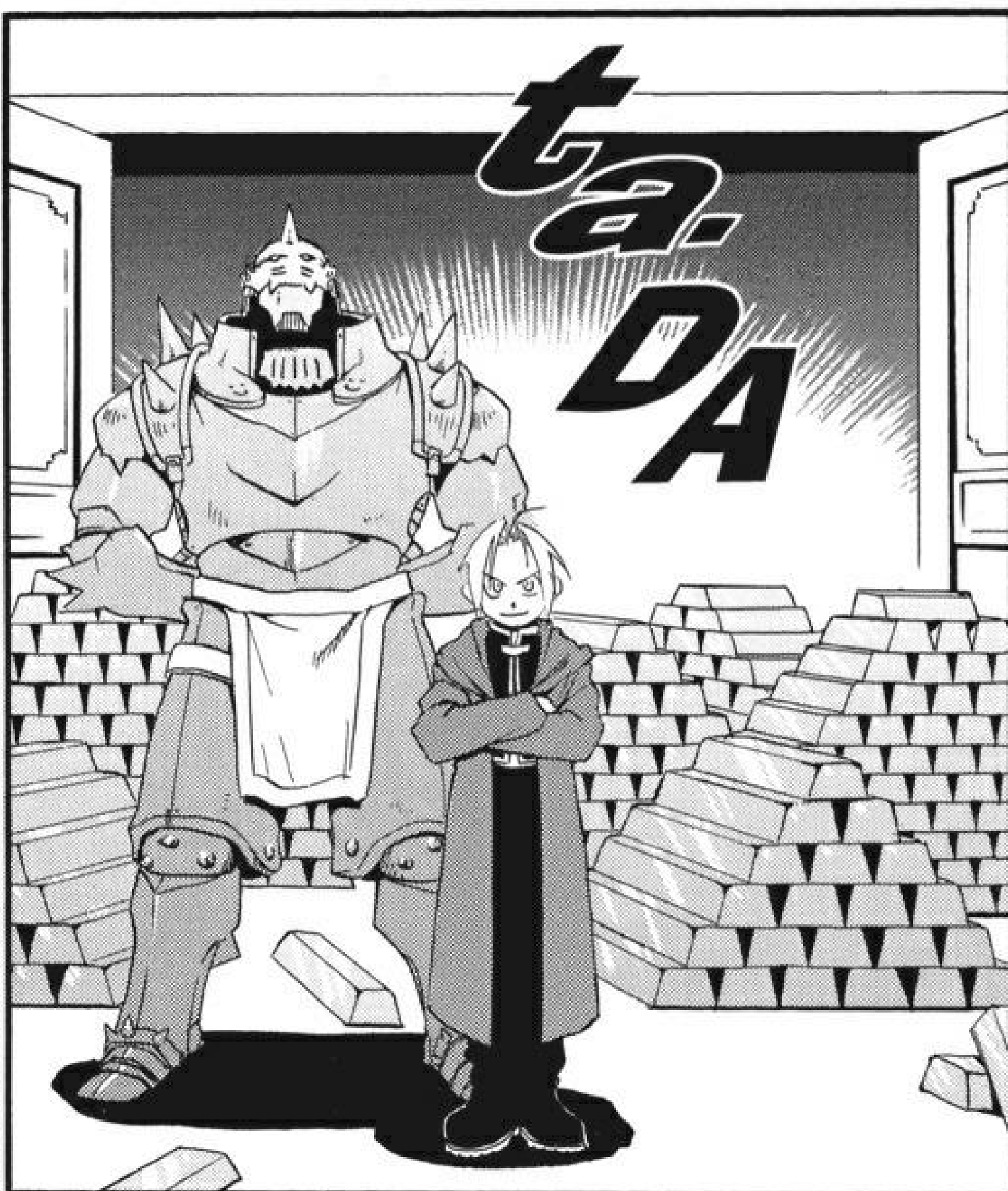
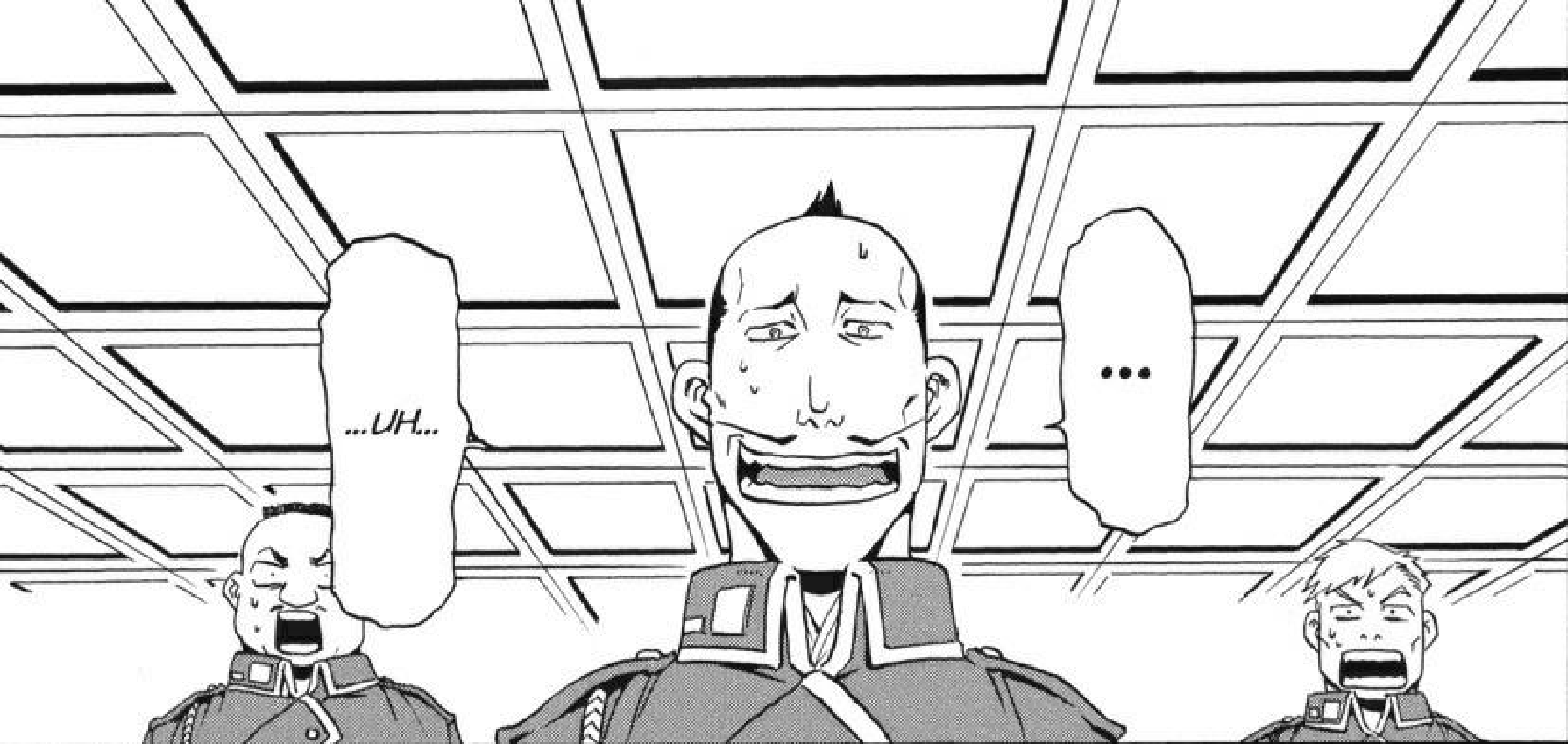
MAN,
OH MAN...
AREN'T YOU
SUPPOSED
TO SET AN
EXAMPLE
FOR ME...
?

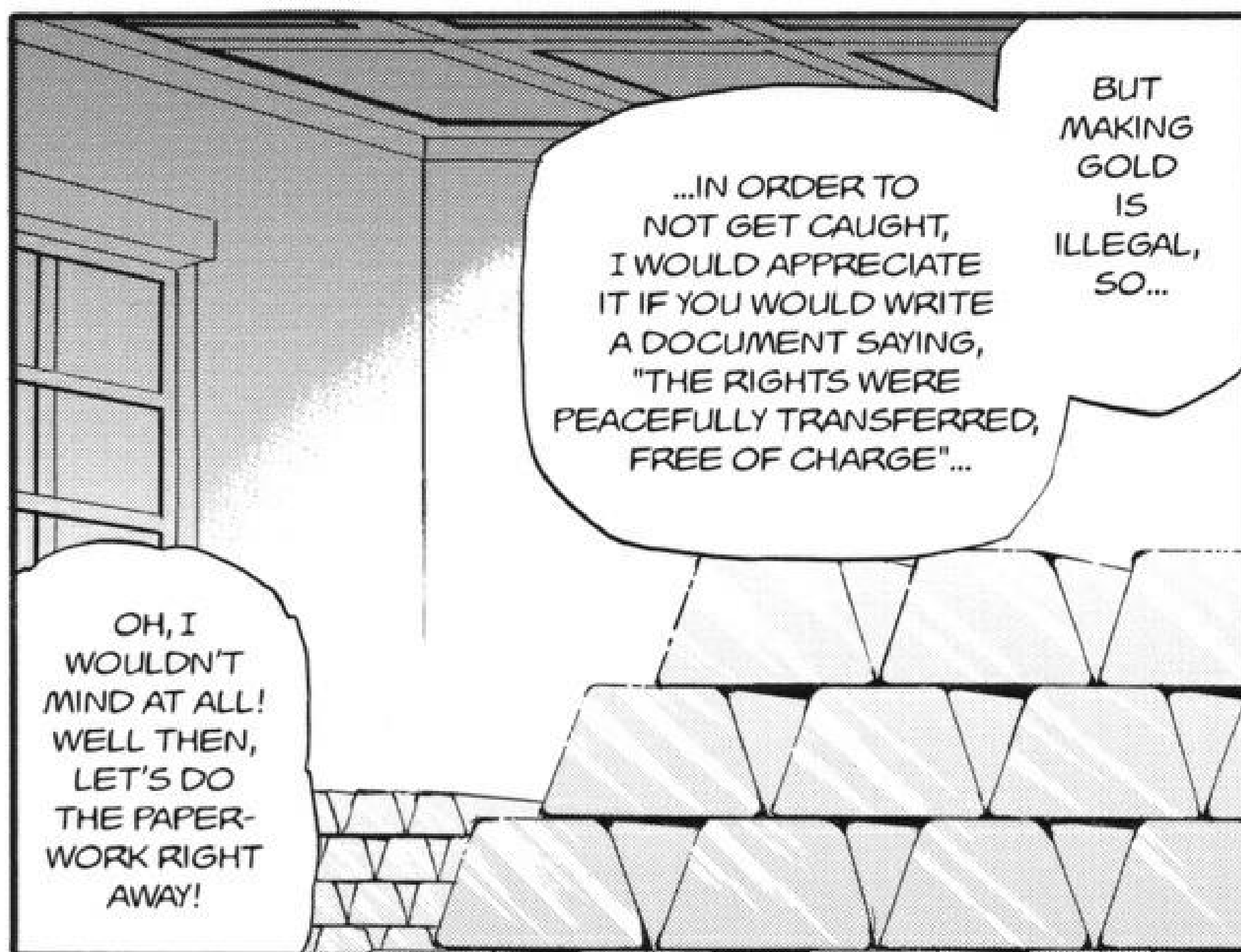
AAAH...
IF WE
DON'T GET
CAUGHT,
WE WON'T
GET
CAUGHT.

YOU'RE
GONNA
DO IT
EVEN IF
I SAY NO,
RIGHT?

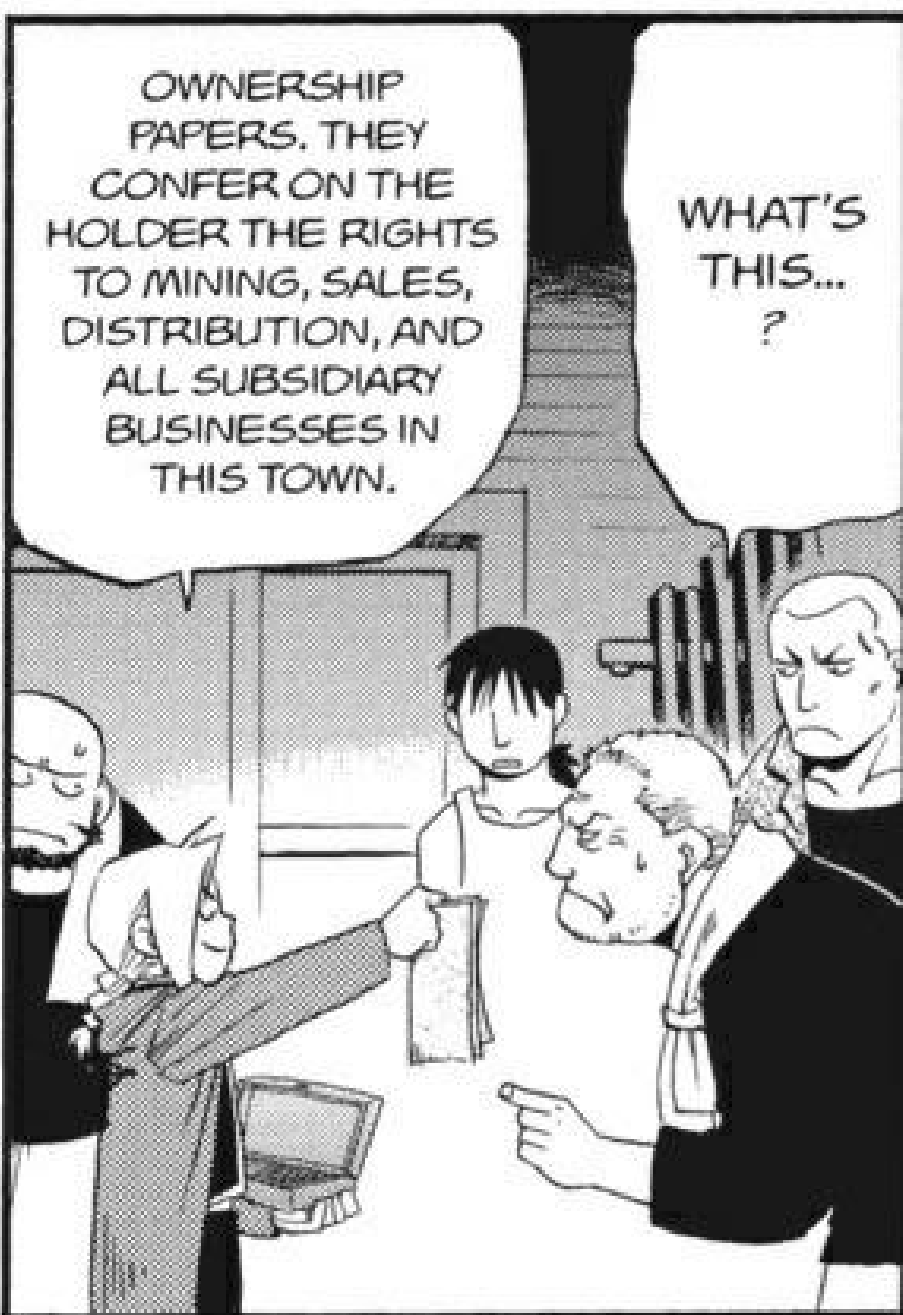


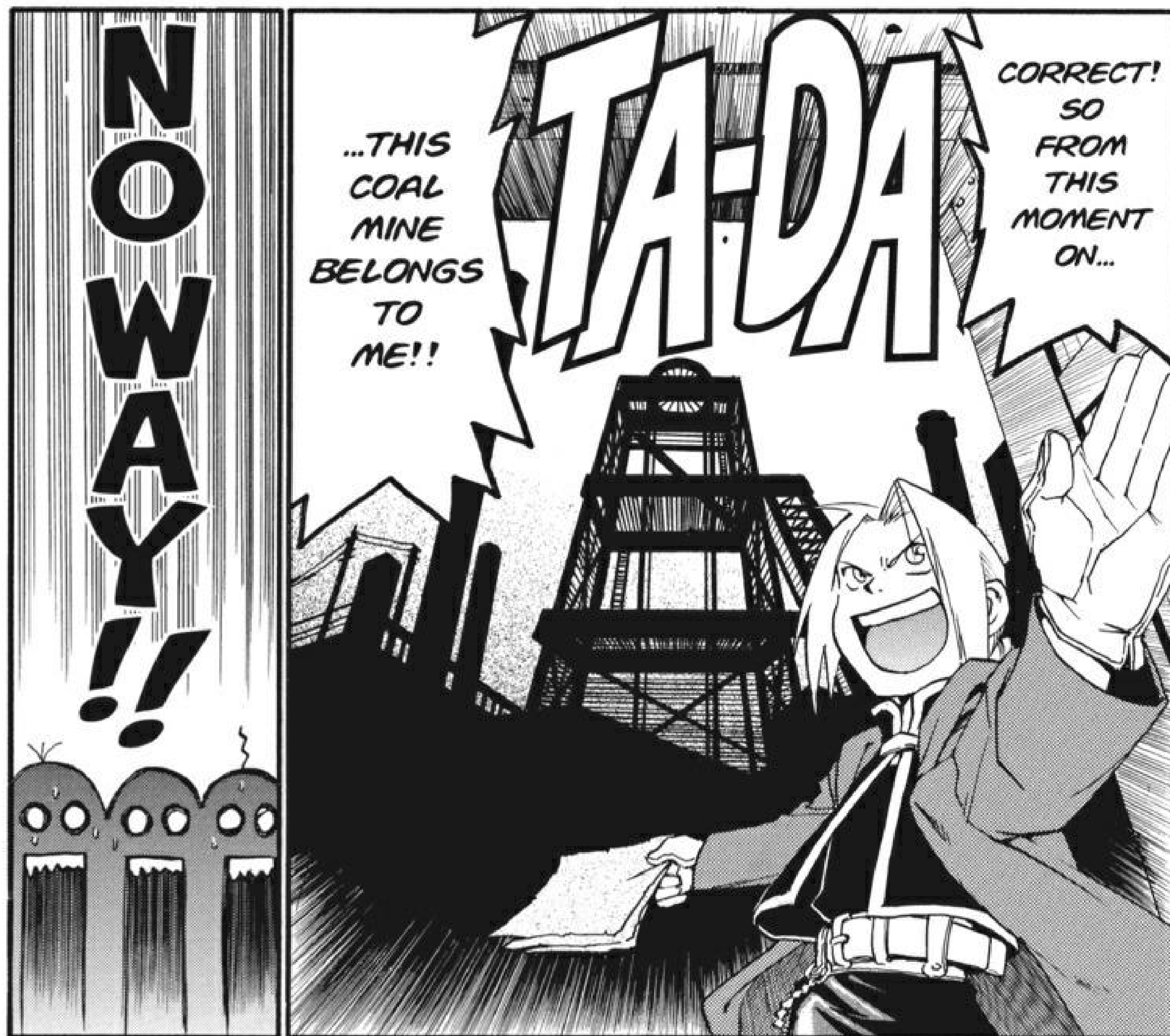
BASHOON

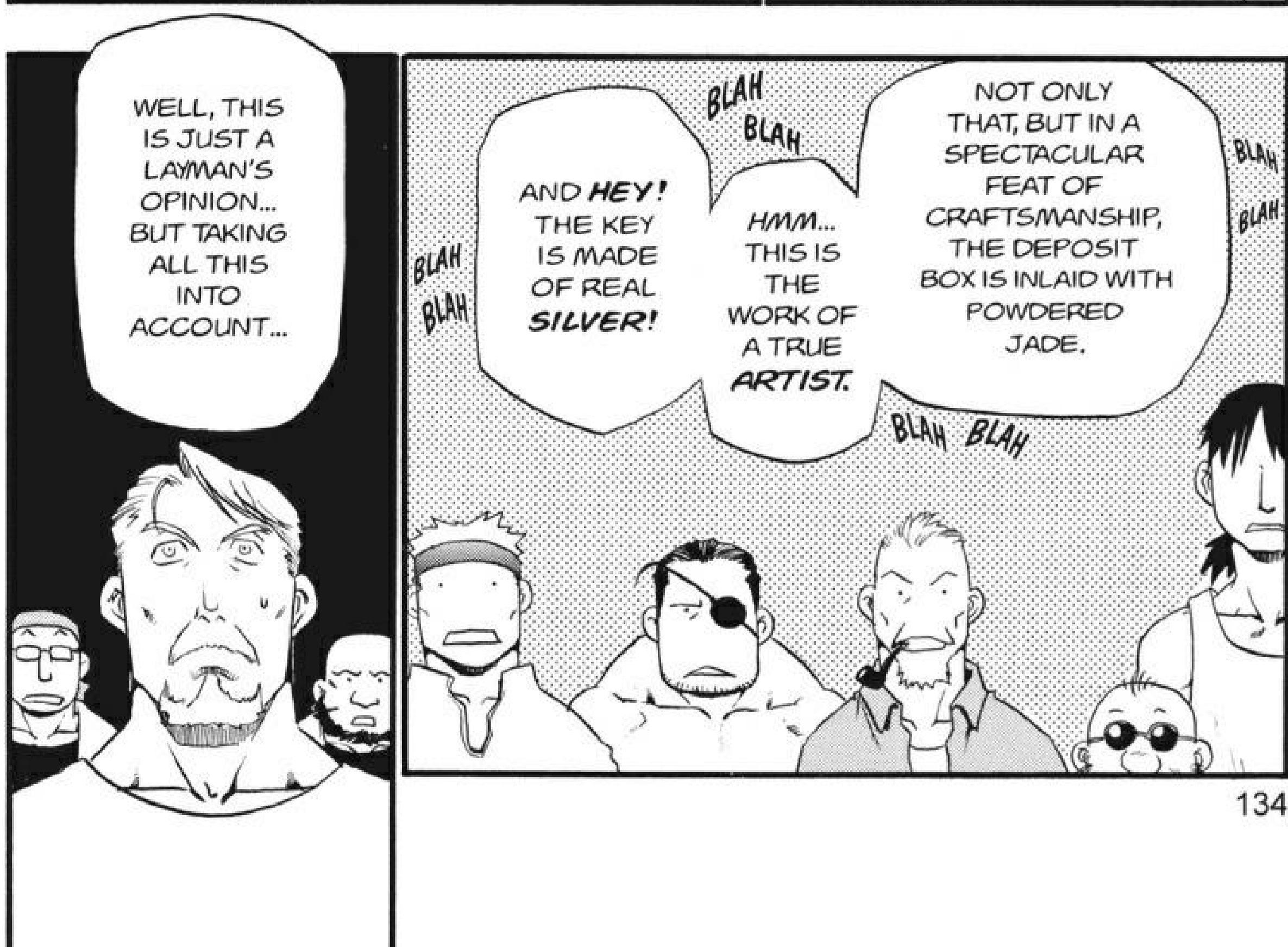












WOULD
THAT
BE
FAIR,
CHIEF
?

...HOW
ABOUT THE
PRICE OF
ONE NIGHT'S
STAY AND
TWO MEALS
FOR TWO
AT YOUR
PLACE?

HA
HA...

HA
HA HA HA!
YOU'RE
RIGHT, THAT
IS
EXPENSIVE
!!

OH...
THE
EQUIVA-
LENT
EX-
CHANGE...

SOLD
!!

**I'LL
BUY
IT
!!**

BANG



LOOM



IF YOU
DON'T
WANT TO
GET HURT
YOU
BETTER...

SH...
SHUT
UP. OUT
OF MY
WAY, YOU
SCUM!



ABUSING
YOUR
POWER,
EH?

IT'S NOT
RIGHT TO
TRY AND
TAKE
SOMEONE'S
PROPERTY
BY
FORCE.



CRACK
CRACK

LIEUTENANT...
IT'S NOT
GOOD TO
UNDER-
ESTIMATE
THE
STRENGTH
OF COAL-
MINERS.

